

ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: WORDING THEIR OWN WORLDS: A
PHENOMENOLOGICAL EXPLORATION
OF TEACHERS' LIVED EXPERIENCES OF
TEACHER LEADERSHIP

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Teacher leadership remains prominent in policy, career ladder programs, research, and professional discourse, yet few studies center what teacher leadership is like for teachers or what teachers are seeking when they construct their own career pathways. This gap is important to address. Teacher dissatisfaction certainly leads to recruitment and attrition challenges, but there is also an imperative for education as a human institution to attend to teachers' needs. This study describes the lived experiences six teachers and the author had of teacher leadership.

Following the methodology of hermeneutic phenomenology as articulated by Heidegger, Gadamer, and van Manen, participant descriptions and other lifeworld texts are analyzed to render themes that evoke the lived bodies, time, spaces, and relationships of teacher leadership. Metaphorically, teacher leaders travel into between-spaces, across borders, and over edges in response to their callings. Teachers experience teacher leadership bodily, insatiably growing and enacting pedagogic knowledge. They experience leadership as a following of a pedagogic need that

compels them. They navigate the world with finely tuned sense-abilities that perceive what students, teachers, and pedagogy need. Lastly, they experience leadership relationally, feeling connected with other teachers near and far. Teachers in this study also experience a profound tension. The decision to accept new responsibilities as their professional vision expands is rooted in their being as a teacher, whether the roles are in the classroom or not. Yet, teacher leadership asks them (via policy, titles, and other cultural signals) to replace their teacher identities with teacher leader or educational leader identities. The teacher leader name does not always feel right to them.

The final chapter of the study invites us to wonder about expanding the teaching profession's scope in a way that resonates with teachers. In a world where "teachership"—the state of being a teacher, just as leadership is the state of being a leader—is recognized, the name "teacher" would be expansive enough to invoke all the opportunities teachers seek in pedagogy's name. The study explores implications for a profession that empowers itself to claim teachers' right of participation *as teachers* in other worlds within education.

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EXPLORATION OF TEACHERS' LIVED EXPERIENCES OF TEACHER
LEADERSHIP

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Dedication

For Chip who told me to go for it. No matter what it took we did it together, as we do with everything. I love you.

For David and Sonia who not only understood when I had to glue myself to books and my computer, but also cheered me on and talked me through writer's block to insights only children can have. I am so proud of you.

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CHAPTER ONE: TURNING IN THE DIRECTION OF TEACHER LEADERSHIP

Getting Into Teacher Leadership: Dwelling in the Between

Casey (2009) describes the experience of existing between places—the particular between-ness that comes with travelling from one place to another:

When we are moving among places in an exploratory manner, we are acutely aware of not having a place to be; however efficient and successful our voyaging may be and however many places we discover, we remain essentially homeless. For we are then between shores and between destinations, *somewhere else* than home, not “settled in.” If we are said to dwell en route, this is dwelling-as-wandering. (p. 121)

That location, somewhere on the way from an origination point to a destination, is found physically in the between and also has the quality of between-ness. It is a location and a feeling. As a teacher leader, I became increasingly aware that I dwelled en route, in the between that is dwelling-as-wandering. Teacher leadership is defined various ways in policy and research, but for me it was taking on roles and responsibilities beyond teaching my own students in my own classroom.

My teaching career in suburban public high schools was a journey back and forth, and even up, within a “traditionally flat” (Hart, 1995) profession. I travelled among students, courses, class periods, high schools, formal leadership responsibilities, meetings, and colleagues. I travelled from decision to decision, carefully weighing the direction that each decision would take me, my students, my colleagues, my own family, and my school. In order to effect meaningful career growth, I constantly sought new opportunities to challenge myself and new pathways towards positively impacting ever-widening circles of students. After seven years, though, I found myself running out of possible destinations. When once I was at

home in the waters of classroom life, I now felt simultaneously adrift and as if I had run aground. Wandering in the same between I had experienced many times before, the promise of a new home, of new shores, and new destinations faded into the horizon, and with it receded the promise I had made to myself to teach in high schools until I retired. Did I become unsettled because I had lost my bearings? Did I start to drift within my teaching career because I neglected some fundamental aspect of myself or of what teaching required? Or, did I become unsettled because I wanted to move in directions that teaching would not let me go?

Confessions of a High School English Teacher

The resistance itself points to the need for something new. It encourages us to imagine alternatives. And it energizes those who are called to work toward those ends. (Palmer, 1998, p. 165)

I got bored. It stings me to admit it, and when I reread my confession I wince the way I do when I see my child fall on the sidewalk. I want to delete that sentence because I was supposed to have prevented it, and I would give anything to undo it, but still, I got bored. The boredom did not come from teaching itself. I loved, and still love, my students; the creative, intuitive, professional act of teaching; the challenge of always making a better decision than the one before it; the productive, inspiring dialogue with a colleague; the energy, looks, silences, and exchanges between teacher and student that lets me know that on that day, with someone's child, I did something good.

Was it selfish to let myself become bored? Boredom feels ungrateful as it rolls onto this page, but it did not feel selfish at the time. It was not the boredom of complacency; I was unsettled far too much about the boredom itself for complacency

to be at fault. It was definitely not the boredom that comes with having nothing to do. My boredom was a quietly centered turmoil in the midst of a hurricane of activity. My brand of boredom was elusive, refusing to be named, diagnosed, and cured.

Boredom is also etymologically elusive. To “be bored” is a figurative adaptation of *boring*, in the sense of the Old English for *perforate*, the Indo-European for strike or fight, or the action of a boring tool, which “moves forward slowly and persistently” (Harper, 2018). Though there is no definitive explanation as to how a sense of *ennui* came to be associated with boredom, it helps to consider that *ennui* comes from the Old French for annoyance. Did my stilted attempts to move forward, to push on and perforate the boundaries around me annoy me? Not exactly. It was a slow burning boredom. I did not see it coming, but once it was upon me, the flames were too big to smother. I was engulfed. And yet, I still felt honored to be in the presence of the young adults in my English classes. Pushing, pulled, called, and stuck, I looked wherever I knew to look to find answers and possibilities.

Why were the answers so elusive? Why could I not rationalize my way out of the dilemma? Like any other educator (Lampert, 1985), I had confronted many pedagogical dilemmas throughout my teaching practice. But those dilemmas, those double propositions, did not involve a crisis of identity, of purpose; they did not call into question my call to teach. To stay in the same teaching and teacher leadership role required a sacrifice of my Self; to leave the classroom in search of new destinations required me to sacrifice the space in which I relate to children-as-students. In this case, the dilemma itself demanded my undivided attention, and in turning towards it I turned my back, or so I felt, on my profession.

Palmer (1998) reassures me as I revisit this turning point in my career, when I chose to walk away from the classroom and in so doing turned toward my being-as-a-teacher: “Any authentic call ultimately comes from the voice of the *teacher within*, the voice that invites me to honor the nature of my true self” (p. 29). It was impossible to turn away from this dilemma and from the discomfort, for to do so would have been to ignore my very being as a teacher. I embraced the dilemma that called to me in the spirit of the motto, “If you can’t get out of it, get into it!” (Palmer, 2000, p. 84).

In order to get “into it,” to understand why this dilemma had to exist in the first place, I paradoxically stepped out of the classroom. I served as the 2009-2010 Teaching Fellow for the National Education Association in Washington, D. C.; I was a teacher leader without a classroom. I had hoped that a bird’s eye, national level view onto the policies that shape the teaching profession would provide me with answers and with direction. Instead I found more questions. I journeyed further, into doctoral studies hoping that some early research would provide answers. Doctoral studies afforded me the opportunity to begin working with the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards in 2011, myself a National Board Certified Teacher. Still, at every turn, instead of answers and destinations, I encountered new pathways. It is only fitting, therefore, to also begin this chapter of my journey by “getting into it,” into the journey that led me here, and into the questions that spur this exploration of teacher leadership. What does it mean to reside in the space created when teacher leadership—and the dilemmas it inspires—calls? Why was the teacher leadership that I experienced within school walls not enough to nourish the teacher within me? What

is calling me, exactly, when I turn toward the lived experiences that get bundled together as “teacher leadership”?

The Call of Teacher Leadership: Turning Inward in Order to Move Outward

The idea of a subject that calls to us is more than metaphor in the community of truth, the knower is not the only active agent—the subject itself participates in the dialectic of knowing. It is as Mary Oliver says: “The world offers itself to your imagination, / calls to you like the wild geese . . . ,/. . . announcing your place / in the family of things.” (Palmer, 1998, p. 105)

I could begin with an analysis of teacher leadership and career growth by interrogating the hierarchical institutions that create the physical and mental spaces that teachers inhabit; the egalitarian (York-Barr & Duke, 2004) subculture of individualism, isolation, and privatism (Hargreaves, 1993) that teachers create to insulate themselves from a reform-laden environment; the professional learning opportunities that can enhance or inhibit teachers’ career growth (Hawley & Valli, 1999; Webster-Wright, 2009); or the policies that both make promises to and punish educators (Cohen, 1990). I could distance myself from my own experiences in the name of objectivity and offer generalizable findings to the educational institutions that determine and shape the career choices available to teachers. Instead I am compelling myself to turn first towards my own experiences as I answer the call to explore teacher leadership as it is and could be lived by other teachers.

Unwilling to squirm away from the questions that nag at me, I must attend to the competing forces I experienced. Fortunately, a poet can offer insight into the forces that animate teachers’ lives:

Man, like the generous vine, supported lives;
The strength he gains is from the embrace he gives.
On their own axis as the planets run,
Yet make at once their circle round the sun;

So two consistent motions act the soul;
And one regards itself, and one the whole. (Pope, 1891, p. 16)

If my soul's motion, the one that regards itself, no longer completes its own circle, then I cannot hope to complete the circle that regards the whole, that supports my students and embraces their needs. Perhaps that makes me feel less selfish in the boredom I felt, for in attending to myself I attend to my ability to be there for others. I certainly did live two intertwined lives as a teacher: the pedagogical self moving with students and the career-minded self moving against boundaries and borders as I tried to expand more and more into the realm of teacher leadership. Without expansion, my pedagogical self would suffer too.

Even though attending to my own needs is essential, it would certainly be easier to evade myself. All too often,

...we try to jump out of our pain into the 'fixes' of technique. To take a hard experience like this and leap immediately to 'practical solutions' is to evade the insight into one's identity that is always available in moments of vulnerability—insight that comes only as we are willing to dwell more deeply in the dynamics that made us vulnerable. (Palmer, 1998, p. 71)

The compulsion to turn inwards, towards those dynamics, is born only partially out of will power. It is born predominantly from the call itself, the call "to let something arrive and come to presence" (Heidegger, 1977/2008g, p. 388). What does it mean to answer this call in such a way that teacher leadership can announce itself? How does the call simultaneously pull me inward and propel me outward toward that which calls me? Ascribing agency to teacher leadership as a being in its own right is more than the rhetorical deployment of anthropomorphism. The call provokes us, troubles us, and inspires us to attend to it. Heidegger (1977/2008g) provides this rendering of what it means to be called:

What makes a call upon us that we should think, and by thinking, be who we are? That which calls us to think in this way presumably can do so only insofar as the calling itself, on its own, needs thought. What calls us to think, and thus commands, that is, brings our essential being into the keeping of thought, needs thinking because what calls us wants itself to be thought about according to its essence. What calls on us to think demands for itself that it be tended, cared for, husbanded in its own essential being, by thought. What calls on us to think gives us food for thought. (p. 390)

Caring for the essential being, or essence, of teacher leadership requires no less than entrusting my own essential being into “the keeping of thought.” The better I understand the nature of my own being in relationship to teacher leadership, the better I can tend to teacher leadership itself. Just as food nourishes the body, this kind of thinking nourishes the thinker and the thought-about. To think in this way—to dwell simultaneously in the spaces of thinking turned inwards and of thinking turned outwards—is to be called.

To be called also requires action. This sense of call can be found in the Greek verb *keleuein*, which, as Heidegger (1977/2008g) explains, has been translated as “call” but “properly means to get something on the road, to get it under way” (p. 387). Answering the call sets into motion the production of “action sensitive knowledge” (van Manen, 1997, p. 21), i.e., knowledge and language that can be acted upon in a pedagogic way, “invites a dialogic response” (p. 21) from the readers who engage in this text, and can provoke change on some level. In moving along the paths created by the call of teacher leadership, I must heed Palmer’s (1983/1993) advice once again and remember that careful, thoughtful action must emanate from a self that is at home within the call’s claim on that self:

Those strategies [for institutional change] can be helpful—but not until we have done some inner work. . . . To ignore the inward sources of our educational dilemmas is only to objectify the problem—and thereby multiply

it. . . . [R]eality is not merely “out there,” apart from us—and this includes the realities of educational institutions. Reality is “in here” as well, and therefore *between us* [emphasis added]; we and the rest of the world conspire to create the conditions in which we live. So the transformation of teaching must begin in the transformed heart of the teacher. . . . Only in such a heart will teachers find the courage to resist the conditions of academic life while we work and wait for institutional transformation. (pp. 107-108)

I have to deepen my understanding of why I am called by teacher leaders’ lived experiences. Only then can my work ever hope to deepen anyone else’s understanding of how teachers’ “felt needs” (Fay, 1975) vis-à-vis teacher leadership can be attended to in a way that honors teachers as professionals instead of leveraging them for systemic gain or manipulating them for buy-in. Just as I found the call of teacher leadership in its between-ness, the in-between that teachers and I create is where we can co-construct institutional and individual change.

To co-create and occupy this reality, I must explore the understandings that I carry into this space. My own experiences of teacher leadership contain insights into how and why I am oriented toward the phenomenon that calls me. As Heidegger (1962/2008) explains, “An interpretation is never a presuppositionless apprehending of something presented to us” (pp. 191-192). My orientation can and should affect how you, the reader, might interact with the dimensions of teacher leadership that this text will evoke. I must, therefore, “make explicit [my] understandings, beliefs, biases, assumptions, presuppositions, and theories. [I will] try to come to terms with [my] assumptions, not in order to forget them again, but rather to hold them deliberately at bay” (van Manen, 1997, p. 47), to question them, to render them, and to reveal their own “concealing character” (p. 47). I submit myself and my work to these

responsibilities because any interpreter is responsible to that which he or she interprets:

To be sure, we genuinely take hold of this possibility [of knowing] only when, in our interpretation, we have understood that our first, last, and constant task is never to allow our fore-having, fore-sight, and fore-conception to be presented to us by fancies and popular conceptions, but rather to make the scientific theme secure by working out these fore-structures in terms of *the things themselves* [emphasis added]. (Heidegger, 1962/2008, p. 195)

I cannot ignore, bracket into oblivion, or eschew my own experiences as a teacher leader because within my own experiences resides the call of teacher leadership, teacher leadership itself, and the possibility that “my experiences could be *our* experiences” (van Manen, 1997, p. 57). I must turn inward, toward the between of teacher leadership as I lived it, so that we might turn outward, toward the teacher leadership experiences that exist between us and towards the call that teacher leadership uses to announce itself. The question points our way: *What is the lived experience of teacher leadership?*

In It: Teacher-as-Teacher-Leader

I feel different sitting at this table. It is not the table of meals, grading, and homework in my home; it is not the desk of paper stacks, half-used pens rescued from the floor, hand sanitizer, and to-do lists that occupies the back corner of my classroom; it is not the desks that students use to write, doodle, read, and drum on; it is not the long cafeteria table or the creaky fold-over desks on the auditorium chairs that the school faculty occupies during staff meetings; it is not the table that absorbs memories of gatherings. This conference table vibrates at a different frequency. I do not yet know who I am in relation to it, this new Other. Hard candy, legal pads and pens are precisely laid out before us like offerings. Where do I put my hands? In my

lap? On the table? What does comfortable look like? I'll click my pen to get ready to write. No, that looks over-anxious. Pen down. Lean back. Pour more water, but not too much. I sit with professors to the left of me and think tank researchers to the right. The recording equipment dares me to say something important.

The principal and I, the only two of twelve from the “ground floor” of schools, exchange a quick glance, a pursed half smile and nod of recognition. I take a deep breath because we two have every right to be at this table, school leaders both. The conversation begins. “If you had to design indicators for ‘Great Public Schools,’ what would they be?” I was asked because I had an official teacher leader title: National Education Association Teaching Fellow. I pushed a thought into the thick air of condescending silence—“One of the best indicators of the quality of a school is the quality of the principal”—and was quickly told that there was no generalizable research to support my personal opinion. A statistician then reported that he had substantial survey data that agreed, and the idea made the board. All future questions were directed to the statistician. Confused and, quite frankly, angry, I wondered, *Whom or what, exactly, am I supposed to be leading right now?* What was expected of me at that conference table? I still wonder. What should a teacher leader do and say, and how do those expectations change in the hands of different people?

What’s in a Name? Defining Teacher Leadership

What is a teacher leader? It is both hard and easy to tell from the term and from definitions that researchers offer. One commonly referenced definition comes from a seminal literature review:

Teacher leadership is the process by which teachers, individually or collectively, influence their colleagues, principals, and other members of

school communities to improve teaching and learning practices with the aim of increased student learning and achievement. Such leadership work involves three intentional development foci: individual development, collaboration or team development, and organizational development. (York-Barr & Duke, 2004, pp. 287-288)

This definition explains some of the goals that a teacher leader might have, but it holds the lived experiences of those teachers at a distance. I can do it alone or with others; I can do it to teachers, principals, anyone else related to the school, a team, or to policies; I can do it for learning and for test scores. I can do it anywhere. What drives me to want to do it though? And what shapes the choices I make in the name of teacher leadership?

Teacher leadership is also characterized as being either formal or informal. One influential text in the world of how-to books for teacher leadership, *Awakening the Sleeping Giant: Helping Teachers Develop As Leaders*, explains that “the goal of becoming an administrator as the only way of getting ahead in education is giving way to teachers finding other outlets for their leadership both inside and outside their schools” (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009, p. 6). After distinguishing teachers from administrators, the authors go on to distinguish informal leadership from more formal forms. Formal roles, including titled positions such as department chair, lead mentor, coach, often require teachers to leave their own classrooms partially or entirely. The alternative is informal leadership for those teachers “who choose not to leave the classroom” (Katzenmeyer & Moller, p. 7). The authors declare that informal teacher leaders are “equally valued and powerful” as they “influence other teachers informally through having casual conversations, sharing materials, facilitating professional development, or simply extending an invitation for other teachers to visit

their classrooms” (p. 7). The compulsion to equalize the power between formal and informal teacher leaders is striking. Is the intent to bolster informal leadership and keep teachers comfortable with taking on roles that could exert influence over colleagues?

The labels “formal” and “informal” carry linguistic and etymological significance for the teachers who enact them. Formal comes from the Latin *formalis*, or *forma*, the word for a form, shape, contour, or appearance (Harper, 2018). To be formal is to be related to a form or appearance. Formal leaders work within structures, with expectations. Since the prefix *con-* means “with,” formal leaders literally work “with forms” as they *conform* to these roles. The suffix *-al*, from Latin, can also mean that the formal teacher leader is in the “act of forming” (Harper). Formal leaders are simultaneously freed to influence others and are constrained by the role they must enact. Informal leaders, however, are without form. Etymologically “without appearance,” their influence can also go unnoticed and unacknowledged. Informal leaders are technically defined by what formal leaders lack, but they gain the ability to lead covertly, quietly, without announcing their ability to influence others. A colleague explained to me that a teacher leader “clearly tries new and different things with their kids and they raise the bar. And everybody knows it. Everybody has ridiculous respect for that person, goes to them with questions, and they never even ask to be that” (R. Smith, recorded conversation, April 12, 2011). The informal leader has the authority of experience and the credibility that comes from meaningful classroom practice. Might a formal teacher leader lead informally or vice versa? Where does leading end and following begin? Do teachers live their identities

according to binaries: formal or informal, teacher or administrator? How do teachers negotiate their location on these grids of possibilities? Where do they locate themselves, and why? What is afforded by each location, and what is risked?

The Promise of Teacher Leadership: Transporting a Career

Despite attempts to define it, the doing, the essence of “teacher leadership” remains elusive. Staring into the words “teacher leader,” teachers see the promise of a journey anchored within and then moving beyond classroom walls. They hear and feel the sound of their own voices being heard by others. Teacher leadership promises teachers the possibility of greater professional fulfillment and a way to honor the call to be with and for children, to teach and learn with them in ever-expanding ways. It also offers teachers the possibility of greater professional respect in a larger sphere of influence. Do teacher leaders make a promise in return?

Palmer (1998) implies that teacher leadership makes a pact with education. Teacher leadership is an action that promises to bring about positive change in the teacher and in society:

[Teachers who could spark movements for educational reform] act in ways that honor their own commitment to the importance of teaching. What these teachers do is often as simple as refusing to yield their seat on the bus: they teach each day in ways that honor their own deepest values rather than in ways that conform to the institutional norm. Sometimes they take risks of a more public sort, promoting alternative visions of education in faculty forums where pedagogical policy is made. (pp. 170-171)

While there is something rousing and beautifully aspirational in his description, the pledge it makes on behalf of teacher leaders should be questioned. Do teacher leaders promise to take risks? Do they have to? Promises are rarely kept in a vacuum, away from dilemma or sacrifice. Promises perilously and deliciously allow very specific

“worlds [to] take shape . . . [and they] provide . . . a horizon for experience” (Ahmed, 2010, p. 14). The idea of teacher leadership as transformational reform creates a dazzling possibility (for teachers and education at large) of a fulfilling world. This horizon absorbs our attention. This promise also obscures other possibilities.

I have to ask, therefore, if the term “teacher leader” constrains the roles that teachers might explore. Does “teacher leadership” as a name for the maneuvers that teachers make in the world of policy and classroom practice give us a false sense of intimacy, an abstraction of the actual experience? The trap might go something like this: I know what teaching is, what teachers do, and I know what leading is, what principals do, so I therefore can infer what it is like to be a teacher who also leads. Does this kind of fusion close as well as open the field of education to new possibilities?

Travelling in the Third Space

Looking back on my experiences from where I sit now, I can put my stuck-self into conversation with Robert Young (2009) and begin to realize that all the time I felt stuck, I had actually been travelling in the hybrid space of teacher leadership, of not-quite-an-administrator and more-than-teaching-five-classes:

You will never find yourself walking by mistake into the third space, even though you may at times find that you are already there, stumbling and stuttering right in the thick of it without knowing it. . . . It is the non-place of the no-fixed-abode. . . . For the third space is above all a site of production, the production of anxiety, an untimely place of loss, of fading, of appearance and disappearance. (pp. 81-82)

Stumbling and stuttering I was, as I tried to discover new avenues of growth as a teacher. I am stumbling and stuttering now as I grasp at words to describe what it felt like to be what I call “bored” in that space of teacher leadership—at once a

professional and on the bottom rung of a heavy bureaucracy. At once breathing in the infinite possibilities that dwell in a classroom and feeling the cinder block walls bore into my skin like the itchy barbs of a wool sweater, I dwelled in that site of production and of the production of anxiety.

I met with a close colleague in a coffee shop after school and tried to talk without crying about my stumbling and stuttering attempts to evolve as a teacher. We met away from the school so it would not hear me talk about it. I did not have the courage to betray it to its face, and I remember telling my colleague, “I feel like a traitor, like I’m going AWOL.” I was leaving pieces of myself behind as I muffled the call of my students as they summoned me to them. Distance broke the magnetic pull they had on me; otherwise, I never could have admitted I had to walk away from that classroom to become more fully myself. I have since met many teacher leaders who managed to carve out spaces for themselves, somewhere between, above, and around the classroom and the administrative and policy offices. Of course, I also noticed that many of them, but not all, had to leave the public school classroom to do it. Why is our profession confused by teachers who push against the hierarchical ceiling above them? What is the confusion and the clarity that sticks to teachers who occupy, redefine, and breathe in this space?

Soja (2009) characterizes the pregnant tensions that live side-by-side with teacher leaders in that space of half-selves:

Thirdspace is contradictory and ambiguous. It has restricting as well as liberating aspects. It arouses a space of radical openness, a space of resistance and permanent struggle, a space of various representations, which can be analyzed in binary terms but where there is always a third additional dimension. . . . Thirdspace is a meeting point, a hybrid place, where one can

move beyond existing borders. It is also a place of the marginal women and men, where old connections can be disturbed and new ones emerge. (p. 56)

What is the third space as it is lived by teachers in schools? If it is not fixed, what is it like to be on a constant quest for a non-place of no-fixed-abode? How do teachers-as-teacher-leaders make sense of themselves, their endeavors, and each other in this space of awareness of being more than a teacher and less than a teacher; more of a leader and less than a leader; expanding within and also away from the classroom? Who are they when, and if, they return to the classroom?

While reformers, researchers, policymakers, and administrators make much (or make little) of teacher leadership, the lived experience of the teacher leaders can be lost in the shuffle. We see only what they do, the changes they create, the challenges they face. Hybrid positions are created to satisfy the need of the school system to retain teachers, to help them stay past what Huberman (1989) calls “the danger zone,” the period between tenure and about 10-12 years of teaching. They are created to tap into teacher knowledge of students for the sake of higher student achievement. New roles are created to engender professional learning. The irony is that the system creates the hybrid role of teacher leader in its own bureaucratic, hierarchical image. It is a half step above teaching, and a half step below administration. It is made up of a little of each world. But what are teachers drawn to and called by? Likewise, how would principals-as-administrators want to exist in this new space?

Without taking into account what it is to embody a third space or how teachers and principals conceive of this space, we run a risk of defining people and

possibilities out instead of calling them in. Julia Lossau (2009) offers a cautionary reminder:

Inhabiting a third space can then become as homogenizing and even stigmatizing as sitting between two chairs. By locating the [teacher leadership] community between [Teachers] and [Leaders]—that is between two chairs—the demarcation line between us (*Inländer*) and them (*Ausländer*) is once again actualized. (p. 72)

Teacher leaders are in a kind of limbo by default and by design. In reconceiving the third space of educational leadership, we both conceive of educational leadership as it already exists and conceive new life within it. In this third space, differences and common interests are brought into relation to “generate new knowledges, new discourses, and new forms of literacy” (Moje et al., 2004, p. 42), to question traditional structures and authority, and to build a bridge between administrators and teachers. The third space is the nagging voice in the back of our heads that tells us not to be satisfied with the pendulum that swings back and forth between binaries, from school control to district control, from administrator instructional leadership to teacher instructional leadership, from empowerment to accountability.

Flatland: The World of Teacher Leadership

There is a story by Edwin Abbott (1884) narrated by a square who lives in a two-dimensional world called Flatland. He explains that those in Flatland see inhabitants of their world (be they lines, squares, circles, triangles) as if they were points or lines, because that is the only side available for view. He can explain his own world better than I can:

Place a penny on the middle of one of your tables in Space; and leaning over it, look down upon it. It will appear a circle. But now, drawing back to the edge of the table, gradually lower your eye (thus bringing yourself more and more into the condition of the inhabitants of Flatland), and you will find the

penny becoming more and more oval to your view, and at last when you have placed your eye exactly on the edge of the table (so that you are, as it were, actually a Flatlander) the penny will then have ceased to appear oval at all, and will have become, so far as you can see, a straight line. (Abbott, 1884, p. 2)

One day his world expands as a sphere visits him:

Straightway I became conscious of a Presence in the room, and a chilling breath thrilled through my very being. . . . Looking around in every direction I could see nothing; yet still I FELT a Presence, and shivered as the cold whisper came again. I started up. "What is the matter?" said my Wife, "there is no draught; what are you looking for? There is nothing." There was nothing; and I resumed my seat, again exclaiming, "The boy is a fool, I say; three-to-the-third can have no meaning in Geometry." At once there came a distinctly audible reply, "The boy is not a fool; and three-to-the-third has an obvious Geometrical meaning." (pp. 39-40)

He cannot tell it is a sphere at first, however, because he can only see the two-dimensional slice available to him. Having only to see frontways and sideways in his world, he has no eyes to see up. The sphere struggles to find the language to explain to the square that there is an "up" not just a "North."

The language available to us to describe the movements that teacher leaders make and to render what they see is similarly constrained. Being a teacher leader is much more than teaching and leading, but our vocabulary, our policies, and our continua conceal many of the possibilities. Teacher + Leader is a two-dimensional rendering of a space that goes above, beyond, around, and through the bureaucratic hierarchies of school systems. Constrained by movement in the either/or of two dimensions, research reports that teachers with leadership roles find themselves in ambiguous tension (Craig, 2009; Smylie & Denny, 1990), conflict (Achinstein, 2002) inside and outside (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993), angling for access and bartering for change (Donaldson et al., 2008), and sorting through the complex positioning that

is required in relation to teachers and to school leaders (Leander & Osborne, 2008). The teacher leaders in these studies must contort themselves, hold themselves in tension, and sort through identities that shift under their feet. These studies tell us what they *do* in order to occupy an open space in a two-dimensional hierarchy; but how do teacher leaders *feel, hear, and live* the third dimension of the space if the language, schools, job descriptions that surround them flatten it out?

Inhabitants of Flatland malign the square as he struggles to help them understand that their world actually expands in directions that are beyond their realm of experience and their comfort zone: “Upward, not Northward,’ for that would be such nonsense, you know. How could a thing move Upward, and not Northward? Upward and not Northward!” (Abbott, 1884, p. 66). One of my colleagues similarly announced the ineffability of teacher leadership through the uncertainty of her own linguistic choices. She fumbled for words while she explained, “We are given no power, and we’re asked to lead. So it is a weird kind of combination of roles because we’re supposed to be one of them but leading them. How do you? I mean, I’m supposed to be one, so I should probably try to be, to be one” (R. Smith, recorded conversation, April 12, 2011). How do we find ourselves in the term teacher + leader, a term that elevates us above our peers even as we exert energy to move out and around our schools in new spaces, not up the chain of command?

Two-dimensional travel: Following tracks. Policies create career paths, career trajectories, and newer policies have created teacher leadership standards and continua for teacher career growth. At some point, a teacher in a classroom (at the left end of most continua) starts to move in the right direction, or starts to move up,

toward roles and responsibilities outside of the classroom. According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980/2003), the directional metaphors in our language are not accidental: “Metaphor plays a very significant role in determining what is real for us” (p. 146). For example, because the winner of a physical fight is usually on top of the opponent, we use “up” to refer to positions of power, of having control and “down” to refer to those who are subject to control. Likewise, social power or high status is experienced as moving up, as “climbing the ladder.” Directives flow from the top down in bureaucratic school systems.

Moving up, or right, means that your career is on the right track; you are between the rails (or in the ruts) that ostensibly guide you on your journey. The word career comes from the Latin *cararia*, meaning "carriage (road), track for wheeled vehicles” (Harper, 2018). Teachers’ careers can be tracked—the administrative track, the teacher of advanced courses track, or the veteran teacher track. Even teacher leadership can be tracked: as getting teacher buy-in for policies, as providing differentiated roles (i.e., coach, department chair, team leader), as mandating participation in initiatives.

We always have to ask whose initiative it is, however; and it is precisely this point that Scott Adams (2002) satirizes in this “Dilbert” cartoon.



What does it mean when teacher empowerment, as part of a career track, happens as part of an initiative? This cartoon reminds me of scenes in Monty Python movies where each person in a large crowd shouts in unison, “Yes, we’re all individuals!” Are you an agent of action if everyone around you makes the exact same choice? Are you empowered if someone tells you it is a requirement or that you must participate in the initiative? Initiative, used as a noun, can trace its roots to the Latin *initiationem* (it shares this root with the word initiation), which refers to participation in secret rites; it is also related to *initiare*, or “originate.” District initiatives to spur teacher leadership invite teacher leaders to participate in decision making that had before been secret, apart, mysterious from their day-to-day work. The one who initiates and invites is the subject, the one with both grammatical and lived control, the one who tracks the other’s participation. Do the officials at the top of the bureaucracy always have to be the ones to initiate, to rope off tracks for general use, to empower?

Just as the allure of off-roading has probably existed since the first road was created, some teachers must want to know what would happen with their careers if they risked going off-track. Yet we are discouraged from doing so. To go off-track is to get lost, to choose poorly. It is startling and dangerous when a car goes off the road, when trains go off tracks designed to keep people safe and on course, or when a carriage wheel escapes the rut in the road. It can be just as jarring for teachers and principals-as-administrators to figure out new career spaces and to venture the discovery of dimensions of being a teacher leader that are above, below, and off the continuum.

Three-dimensional travel: Sensing the beyond. Sitting in my classroom in a two-dimensional kind of teacher leadership, I sensed other possibilities. I had the freedom that comes with being trusted, and the freedom to move up to administration, over into counseling or another discipline, or away from my district altogether. Where is the space, I wondered, that emanates from the intimate space of the classroom? The third, open space of educational leadership surrounded me and my colleagues, but we could not sense it in its fullness. Do our careers only move up and over? Calling our endeavors and attempts at opening the space of educational leadership by the name of “teacher leadership,” we define it in terms of the only two dimensions we understand. Yet we sense the sphere, a new sphere of influence.

I return to Flatland (Abbott, 1884) to make some sense of the bodily experience the teacher leader has when first moving beyond the classroom, above it, out from it, yet remaining of the classroom. And so the sphere shows the square that a third dimension exists the only way he can. When words and concepts fail, they travel:

"Ha! Is it come to this?" thundered the Stranger: "then meet your fate: out of your Plane you go. Once, twice, thrice! 'Tis done!"

An unspeakable horror seized me. There was a darkness; then a dizzy, sickening sensation of sight that was not like seeing; I saw a Line that was no Line; Space that was not Space: I was myself, and not myself. When I could find voice, I shrieked loud in agony, "Either this is madness or it is Hell."

"It is neither," calmly replied the voice of the Sphere, "it is knowledge; it is Three Dimensions: open your eye once again and try to look steadily."

I looked, and, behold, a new world! (p. 48)

Teacher leaders dwell on that edge, at the surface of the larger, open space. A teacher leader is both inside teaching and outside of it, is inside school leadership and outside

of it, is both aware and unaware of the possibilities of looking up and out into an expanded space of teacher leadership. How fragmenting and confining, for if, as Bachelard (1964/1994) observes, “There exists a border-line surface between such an inside and outside, this surface is painful on both sides” (p. 218). On the other hand, an entire dimension of possibility is open to the teacher leaders who listen for its call.

As teacher leaders move up and out, they look down at their classrooms from different heights and angles. Do they get dizzy? What do teacher leaders do with everything that their senses take in? Does the wonder of the world they see, the world of teaching and learning, steady them? Or can it overwhelm and confuse? What steadies and rules teacher leaders as they travel?

In the third space: Stranger in a familiar land. Before the square of Flatland becomes aware of the third dimension around him, he is of his world. As soon as he ascends with the sphere and sees the insides of his fellow citizens, he has knowledge that sets him apart. His fellow countrymen find him dangerous. He becomes an Other, one who goes against the expected norms of Flatland. They wonder who he is to presume that he has knowledge that they do not have. What happens when teacher leaders, who are still inhabitants of the flatlands of teaching, become empowered and initiated participants in a world apart from what other teachers see, in the bird’s eye world of school leadership? Do other teachers see them as “Other?” when they return to the teacher space? I offer some stories of teacher

leaders I know who find themselves in the between-ness of having-been-above and going-back-down.

One of my colleagues, another high school English teacher, told me that she had once been appointed department chair rather abruptly. One day she was talking with fellow teachers in the planning area as “we” and as “us.” The next day when she walked into the classroom that would contain their department meeting, her first one as chair, she opened the door to a freshly sliced silence, the silence that announced her Otherness to her. She was no longer “us.”

After I left the high school I kept in touch with one of my colleagues, Michelle, a National Board Certified Teacher, lead mentor, and soon-to-be department chair. She also felt the gaze of fellow teachers. One colleague “told on” Michelle to their assistant principal that Michelle’s emails were too authoritative and commanding. Michelle was concerned that anything she said to teachers came across as a directive simply because she seemed to have unwavering support from the school administration. Feeling “boxed in,” she started to limit her contact with department members. Later that year, the assistant principal reprimanded her for trying to aspire above her station. Michelle was told to “stay in her place.” How did she maneuver in the between-ness of teacher leadership as the walls started to squeeze in on her? Michelle vented to me one day about how she hides her credentials (recorded conversation, March 26, 2011):

I can stand on research, I can stand on experience, I can stand on my master’s degree, I can stand on my National Board Certification, and I can make suggestions about teaching and how kids learn. But instead of justifying myself that way, I say, “How about if you try it this way?”

Michelle announces herself as a citizen of the two-dimensional space to salvage her status as “fellow teacher.”

I also know a social studies teacher in her first year as instructional coach who had a similar experience. Rachel also became aware of herself as something other than a teacher the first time she had to address the staff at her school. Not quite a teacher, she was now “linked to administration,” to “them.” And, she said, “It was terrifying. They’re all sitting at cafeteria tables, and I’m up there with a microphone.” The talismans of power in schools are not so glamorous as those of corporate America or royalty, but one should not underestimate the power that drips from the right to stand up in a position of power at a staff meeting, to not only speak but also to be amplified by the microphone. In contrast, the teachers take the seats that students usually occupy, and are dismissed en masse. Now sensing her Self as Other, Rachel sees herself as an Object, the one who feels “trapped” (Howard, 2002, p. 54) by the Look.

Sartre (1956/2001) reveals what it means to receive the Look: “The person is presented to consciousness *in so far as the person is an object for the Other*” (p. 236). What is so powerful about being looked at as an Other that Michelle and Rachel shy away from it, shielding themselves so as only to expose themselves partially? One way to get inside of this tendency is to explore this possibility:

We collaborate with the structures of separation because they promise to protect us against one of the deepest fears at the heart of being human—the fear of having a life encounter with alien ‘otherness,’ whether the other is a student, a colleague, a subject, or a self-dissenting voice within. We fear encounters in which the other is free to be itself, to speak its own truth, to tell us what we may not wish to hear. We want those encounters on our own terms, so that we can control their outcomes, so that they will not threaten our view of world and self. (Palmer, 1998, p. 37)

As scary as these encounters with otherness—our own and the otherness of Others—can be, we can also “discover [ourselves] in the process of becoming a probable object for a certain subject” because “[i]f the Other is on principle the one who looks at me, then we must be able to explain the meaning of the Other’s look” (Sartre, 1956/2001, pp. 232, 233). Great possibilities reside in the Look. The Look can prompt a turning towards a question or way of being that calls to us.

If it is too difficult, too claustrophobic at times to escape the two-dimensional plane of typical school careers, perhaps it is through this Look that we can see ourselves as we might from above, from the third space: “In fearing as such, what we have thus characterized as threatening is freed and allowed to matter to us” (Heidegger, 1962/2008, p. 180). Once the Look of the Other matters, confronting and embracing the look of fellow teachers can still be disarming because it shifts a sense of self, violently even. I am of teachers, and then I am not. Who am I now? I question my own being-as-teacher. What is it that teacher leaders do to survive the Look and transform themselves under its gaze? What is the sensemaking that comes from what we learn as Others? Sartre (1956/2001) pushes me to realize that “I need the Other in order to realize fully all the structures of my being” (p. 198). What is it like for teacher leaders to be called by the possibility of moving beyond the disorientation of Otherness in order to safely, productively, and professionally come into the presence of Other teachers? The Look of the teacher might be the best approximation of the high powered tools of perception that teachers-as-teacher-leaders could gain from a truly accessible third space. Perhaps it is in the Look that the third space of imagination comes into being.

Above It and At It: Teacher-as-Researcher and Teacher-as-Leader

Objectivism is the epistemological view that things exist as *meaningful* entities independently of consciousness and experience, that they have truth and meaning residing in them as objects. (Crotty, 1998, p. 5)

At times we become the-one-looked-at. Other times questions, dilemmas, and issues arise that require us to be the inspectors, to direct our gaze outward. As a teacher leader I was tethered; I could not float entirely above the walls of my school and of my experiences. I felt the limitations of those walls and could only sense the presence of the as-yet-unasked questions that hovered around me, inaccessible from the space I occupied. I cut the line and moved out and over my local public schools. I journeyed to new destinations: a doctoral program that I hoped would help me ask questions and then answer them and a job facilitating standards committees for the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. I began as a consultant, and over the years advanced to the vice president role that now carries responsibility for the standards and assessment that make up the certification program. When I first became a teacher-as-researcher and a teacher-as-leader—or a teacher-as-“other educator,” the option on dropdown menus I had to select when identifying myself on teaching mailing lists or other such sign-ups—I started to float above teachers and my right to say “we.” Not exactly turning inward, I now turned my attention *downward*, at teachers from my new vantage point. It was an out of body experience.

That vantage point might be something like what the sphere could see of Flatland. The sphere says to the square (Abbott, 1884):

I tell you that I come from Space, or, since you will not understand what Space means, from the Land of Three Dimensions . . . From that position of advantage I discerned all that you speak of as SOLID (by which you mean "enclosed on four sides"), your houses, your churches, your very chests and

safes, yes even your insides and stomachs, all lying open and exposed to my view. (pp. 41-42)

The view from an institute of *higher* education affords insights that involved participants cannot always gain. While the “Ivory Tower” is often invoked as a pejorative commentary on the distance of academia from the “real” world, the metaphor also reveals the advantageous vantage point that it offers those who dwell there. The change in perspective allows the researcher to see inside systems and cultures, just as the sphere can discern what is solid; and the researcher can see the relationships within those systems and cultures, just as the sphere can see the lay of Flatland all within its view.

Of course, what the researcher does not always have access to is the meaning of the lay of the land as it is lived. Language is one of the places in which beings deposit accumulated experience; it is “in some sense a huge reservoir in which the incredible variety of richness of human experience is deposited” (van Manen, 1997, p. 61). Inhabitants use the language “enclosed on four sides” because it is meaningful to them; their worldview is shaped by and shapes their language. The different perspective of the sphere, the view from above, gives the sphere important *in-sights*, but the sphere cannot pretend that its terminology, “solid,” should automatically take primacy over the square’s—even though the sphere insinuates that “solid” is what those dwellings truly are, if only those silly flatlanders knew better. Neither can the square discount the sphere’s findings. The researcher, then, should ensure that his or her *in-sights* are meaningful within the lifeworlds of the people, cultures, and systems to which he or she attends. Otherwise, the sphere and the square will lose each other in translation.

The teacher-as-researcher version of myself first tried to be the sphere, asking objective systemic questions, questions of policy, questions of power and hierarchy. A literature review written in my first semester of coursework recorded the questions that I was asking at the time. The overarching question was, “How does the hierarchical power structure affect teachers?” I also formulated sub-questions:

1. Does the hierarchical power structure view teachers from a deficit perspective when trying to involve them in decision-making?
2. What do teachers value within their own culture of power?
3. What mechanisms do teacher leaders use to maintain their role and identity as teachers? To create their role as a leader?
4. How do structures created by the hierarchy (e.g., time allocations, mandated teacher groups, attempts at shared leadership, and formal teacher leadership roles) affect the ways in which teachers interact?
5. To what extent do structures created by administrators buttress their own “culture of power” or actively engage teachers in creating new cultures? (Hamilton, 2010)

All of these questions presuppose definite answers. I assumed that the solutions to the dilemmas in the between of teacher leadership existed entirely *out there*, in a tidy package of published research. If I scoured the right databases, asked the right questions, looked in the right places, I could untangle myself and discover the reality of teacher leadership.

Meanwhile, I started working at the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. At the time I write this I am the vice president of standards and assessment, but my first job was as consultant and then director of standards. I facilitated the committees of teachers and teacher educators who author the professional standards on which Board certification is based, as well as a small committee that wrote the initial draft of competencies that would form the basis of a partnership among the National Board, Center for Teaching Quality, and the National

Education Association. I struggled with how to introduce myself to teachers. On the one hand, I was one of them as a National Board Certified Teacher myself. Even though I was not currently teaching, that credential sent a powerful signal that when I had been in the classroom, I knew my stuff, and if I went back, I would still know my way around. I had stories to offer when we discussed aspects of practice, such as formative assessment or handling dilemmas of practice that require compromise, but all of my stories were more distantly in the past than the teachers I was charged with leading. I worried my anecdotes would ring hollow and stale; because I did not have a constant supply of new ones, the stories I told had been recycled many times over.

As I moved up the organizational ladder and began representing the National Board publicly, I struggled with how to introduce myself at a microphone. I used to be a teacher? No. I do not know if I have the right to still claim membership in that tribe, but I know in my gut I still am, in my core, a teacher. I used to teach high school English? Better. It is at least accurate, but I worried about sounding like experts dropped into schools who claim authority based on one or two years of teaching when all of us teachers could see right through that claim and subtly (or not) rolled our eyes. I landed on, “I am a National Board Certified Teacher who used to teach high school English students. Now I have the privilege of working with teachers on behalf of the National Board.” Even better, but I knew I was skirting the issue. I did not know where I was anymore in relation to my own center as a teacher, but I did always know my work was about supporting the teacher leadership and professional agency of the teachers in my care. I swore that when I convened teachers through my work at the Board they would feel more grounded in themselves as teachers and more

honored in that identity than I ever had experienced myself. I did not know if I was still a teacher leader or not, but I refused to look down on them by giving up my teacher-ness, or giving up on theirs, without a fight.

My orientation toward teacher leadership remained true even though I held it at a distance. As a teacher-as-researcher, I travelled from semester to semester and question to question. As a teacher-as-leader within an organization that worked on behalf of the teaching profession, I travelled from city to city, and teacher gathering to teacher gathering. I felt my teacher-ness tug on the bottom of my shirt the same way that my children call me to them when my attention has been elsewhere for too long.

Working On or Working With?

Leadership is central to any question that researchers ask about teacher leaders and the roles they play in schools and larger systems of school reform. Accordingly, an early and necessary question during my doctoral studies and my everyday work with teachers revolved around the kind of power that played into teacher leadership and into school leadership in general. Just as I investigated whether and to what extent school and district officials worked *on* or *with* teachers, I was interrogating myself to determine if I was going to work *on* or *with* my abiding questions about teacher leadership. My answers would shape future questions and would determine the vantage point from which I would approach the call to understand the lived experience of teacher leadership.

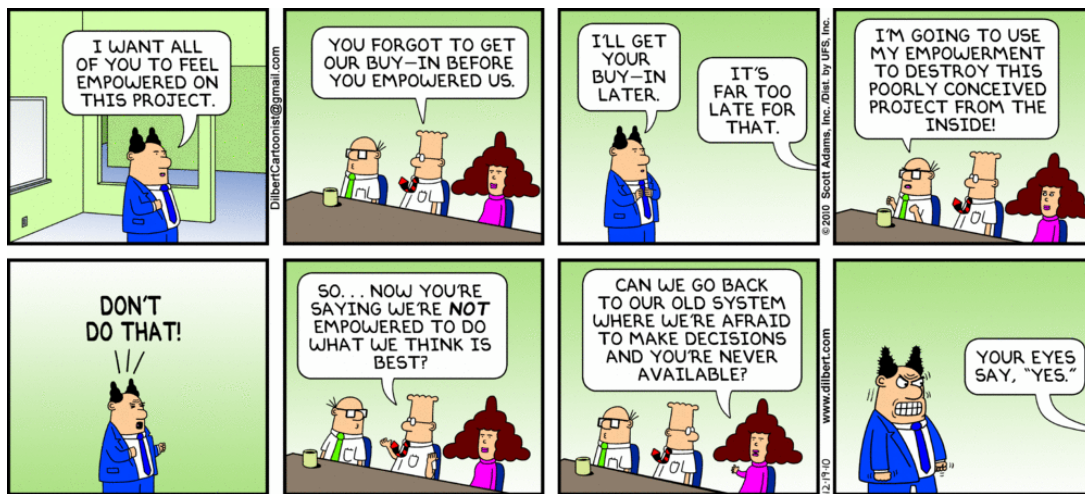
Unanswered Questions about School Leadership

Overall notions in today's schools of who and what constitute leadership have broadened with theories of shared leadership (Lindahl, 2008) and distributed leadership (Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2004), with acknowledgments that the days of the lone "heroic leader" at the head of the charge from the principal's office are over. And yet, when someone talks about "school leaders," they usually mean the principals. This headline attached to a *Washington Post* article about principals is just one example of many: "Charter schools in D.C., U.S. suffer lack of leadership" (Butrymowicz, 2011). Complicating the picture is the shift in what the principal actually does in this era of increasing accountability. Principals today are commonly referred to within school systems as "administrators," and, as Aoki (2005b) cautions, that term is so steeped in management theory that it is puzzling to trace the evolution from the original sense of principal as "the leading teacher" to principal as lead administrator.

This puzzle led me to coursework in phenomenology, and it is there that I searched new texts and old words. What became clear was the "need to be mindful when metaphors are borrowed; dangers lurk when one thing is likened to another" (Aoki, 2005b, p. 435), and in this case both the administrators and the teachers are dehumanized when people in schools become resources to manage, and when school leadership is appropriated as a form of management. As the idea of principal teacher-as-*lead teacher* evaporated years ago into the ether of management lingo, *teacher leaders* emerged. What happens when a role for principals that was driven to its extinction is reanimated into teachers by that same educational system? Is an

inversion of the two words in the title enough to wedge educational, not managerial, leadership back into existence?

The cartoon “Dilbert” (Adams, 2010) offers some insights into why the notion of leadership is so difficult to pin down.



Scott Adams’s cartoons, famous for satirizing corporate workplaces, can easily, and tellingly, participate in a conversation about leadership in schools. The boss in the cartoon could just as easily be the principal-turned-administrator, to borrow Aoki’s name for the role, and the workers sprung from their cubicles could just as easily be teachers at a staff meeting.

“Power” comes from the Old French for “to be able” (Harper, 2018), so who is able to do what? Who is the subject and who or what is the object? Where does the power reside in this scenario? With the principal-administrator—who giveth and taketh away the power to participate in decision-making, who can truly empower or choose to create the illusion of participation? With the employees—who can make recommendations, subvert policies, or even rebel on the basis of disenfranchisement or to protect the school from an initiative that could cause harm? Policymakers and

educators cannot use the term “leader” and immediately have a clear understanding of who is doing the leading and how. The artificially welded term “teacher + leader” perhaps represents an attempt to create clear and clean parameters for a role that has fuzzy, wavy, dotted borders.

Toward the Research With-In

When I started to question the concept of leadership as part of my first coursework with phenomenology, I assumed that the questions I asked had answers that I could uncover. Soon, however, the question expanded from, What kind of power do teacher leaders want? (a question that assumes a concrete answer that, if acted upon, could fix a system), to: What does it mean when we seek power or authority? From where or from whom does power emanate? What is power as we are called by it? What does it promise us? My questions became animated by lived experiences and by my connection to the teachers who lived them. Teacher leadership called me back into the tangles of the between.

With-In It: Teacher-as-Teacher Leader-as-Phenomenologist

When you love your work that much—and many teachers do—the only way to get out of trouble is to go deeper in. We must enter, not evade, the tangles of teaching so we can understand them better and negotiate them with more grace, not only to guard our own spirits but also to serve our students well. (Palmer, 1998, p. 2)

Palmer’s (1998) discussion of the difference between power and authority brings forward the between we inhabit when we want to influence or inspire action, change, or exploration:

In a culture of technique, we often confuse authority with power, but the two are not the same. Power works from the outside in, but authority works from the inside out. We are mistaken when we seek authority outside ourselves, in sources ranging from the subtle skills of group processes to that less than

subtle method of social control called grading. . . . The clue is in the word itself, which has *author* at its core. Authority is granted to people who are perceived as *authoring* their own words, their own actions, their own lives, rather than playing a scripted role at great remove from their own hearts. (pp. 32-33)

As a teacher leader myself, and as a teacher-as-researcher who wants her work to have a positive influence on the working lives of teachers, I have to take Palmer's distinction very seriously. If my work is to help teachers author their own worlds, not just learn to filter themselves through the worlds created by policies and academic research, then it has to allow the teachers who participate in my research and whom I encounter throughout my career to participate with "their own hearts." They have to be *in* it with me.

I also have to travel back into myself because conducting research that would hopefully enable teachers to author, to language, and to participate in the creation of their own career pathways also means that I, as a teacher leader, have to work from the inside out. As van Manen (1990) says, I can only "genuinely ask the question of the nature of [teacher leadership] if I am indeed animated by this question in the very life I live" (p. 43). If the risk of conducting research that would be considered objective, and therefore sound, is that teacher leaders (myself included) would be silenced by protocols, then it is too great of a risk. Teacher leadership's resounding call demands that teacher leaders be re-sounded.

Half-Lives and Intersections

Qualitative researchers often find themselves living half-lives. At once the insider and the outsider, "neither a pristine self nor an Other" (Fordham, 1996, p. 3), "halfies" (p. 3) work both with and in their phenomena of interest. In the context of

education, the “common assumption [is] that knowledge for teaching should be primarily ‘outside-in’” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993, p. xi) because teacher knowledge is too subjective, too contextual to be generalizable, often a code word for “useful.” Other scholars challenge post-positivistic assumptions. Flyvbjerg (2006), for example, argues that insights into how knowledge is applied contextually is what builds deeper understanding and expertise. Feminist critical theorists in particular critique the Cartesian belief that experiential knowledge is less valuable than knowledge derived from ostensibly detached logic. Dismissing the complexities and implications of situated, experientially-based knowledges, they argue, in effect silences the voices of peoples without power (Dill & Zambrana, 2009; Haraway, 1991; Stone-Mediatore, 2003).

Taking into account the totality of experience, the phenomenological question, *What are teachers’ lived experiences of teacher leadership*, challenges and subsumes distinctions such as thinking/feeling, objective/subjective, or empirical/normative. These binaries can be useful heuristically, but phenomenologically they veil the ultimately transcendent, mysterious nature of existence (try as we might to will it, or categorize it, into submission). Mindful of the need to be aware of and also to resist the insider/outsider dynamic, I have to ask questions about my positionality. Does working *on* teacher leadership mean I hover above teacher leaders from a slight distance, accessing the in-sights of the sphere? Is it possible to also be *of* teacher leadership and get down into it to understand it as it is lived? Will constantly negotiating my location require me to live in a divided way, as the hyphenated teacher-as-researcher that I thought I had left behind?

Thinking about our lives and identities as intersections (e.g., insider/outsider; teacher/teacher leader; formal leadership/informal leadership; woman/African American; Latino/middle class) can reify false distinctions, and it can also be convenient and even necessary at times. Intersectionality as a construct allows us to consider how different social characteristics such as race, class, gender, and sexuality affect the social and economic forces that act on individuals and groups of individuals (Collins, 1998). It behooves us to remember “intersection” derives from the Latin *secare*, “to cut” (Harper, 2018), which brings a potential danger into focus. If we act such that “one is what one does” (Heidegger, 1962/2008, p. 283), we over-identify with a category or intersection of categories. In effect we turn the person into a stand-in for a category, rather than recognize a human being with a full range of lived experiences and possibilities for fulfillment (Freire, 1970/2010).

Crossroads

Torn, I find that Naples’s (2003) analysis provides a way not out of the mire, but a way towards embracing the possibilities that radiate from it:

The bipolar construction of insider/outsider also sets up a false separation that neglects the interactive processes through which “insiderness” and “outsiderness” are constructed. Outsiderness and insiderness are not fixed or static positions. Rather, they are ever-shifting and permeable social locations that are differentially experienced and expressed by community members. (p. 49)

Separate socially-constructed categories of identity can converge at intersections and forge a kind of unity, but intersections require movement in one specific direction. At intersections we converge, but intersections also force us to make a choice: In which direction will I turn? Which part of my identity will I invoke this time? Which parts will I exorcise in order to move forward? Individuals are, after all, more than the sum

of their parts. Identity is more of an “evolving nexus where all the forces that constitute . . . life converge in the mystery of the self. . . . In the midst of that complex field, identity is a moving intersection of inner and outer forces that make me who I am, converging in the irreducible mystery of being human” (Palmer, 1998, p. 13). At times we are aware of the wholeness, of the possibilities around us in heretofore unexplored dimensions; other times we are pressed into awareness of specific aspects of our identities. *Inter*-sections are places where we are *between* places. Just as intersections as a site of between-ness can cut and confine, they can also be places that announce the possibility of travelling to new destinations.

The job title “teacher leader” is a linguistic and lived intersection of two roles: teacher and leader. What guides teachers as they navigate the intersections that announce themselves in the course of their careers? How do I, as a teacher, teacher leader, and researcher navigate the intersections that present themselves to me? Hermeneutic phenomenology began to point away from dwelling *with* teacher leaders, *with* teachers, and *in* teacher leadership as separate but simultaneous modes of being; it began to point towards dwelling *within* teacher leadership, in the between of complicated situated knowledges, relationships, identities, and lived experiences. My journey into the between of my research mirrors the between-ness of teacher leadership itself. Hermeneutic phenomenology does not try to simplify these tangles; rather, it opens a way to understanding, to a rendering of the lived experiences of teacher leaders that can evoke the possibilities that reside in these spaces.

Re-turning: Hermeneutic Phenomenology Points the Way

And again, we truly incline toward something only when it in turn inclines toward us, toward our essential being, by appealing to our essential being as what holds us there. . . . Only when we are so inclined toward what in itself is to be thought about, only then are we capable of thinking. (Heidegger, 1977/2008g, pp. 369-370)

As he is pointing that way, man is the pointer. . . . His essential being lies in being such a pointer. (p. 375)

I first encountered the possibilities of hermeneutic phenomenology when I read *Researching Lived Experience: Human Science for an Action Sensitive Pedagogy* (van Manen, 1997). The text poses the question, “Why then should one adopt one research approach over another? The choice should reflect more than mere whim, preference, taste, or fashion” (p. 2). I assumed the answer would be the familiar edict that the question itself is the determining factor when a methodology and corresponding methods are selected (e.g., Crotty, 1998). I was mistaken.

Rather, the method one chooses ought to maintain a certain harmony with the deep interest that makes one an educator (a parent or teacher) in the first place. . . . The human science approach in this text is avowedly phenomenological, hermeneutic, and semiotic or language oriented . . . because pedagogy requires a phenomenological sensitivity to lived experience. (van Manen, 1997, p. 2)

The methods, of course, must be consistent with the research question, but van Manen also recognizes that the methods must resonate with my being as a teacher.

Phenomenology offers the researcher, research participant, and reader the possibility of fully engaging with the phenomenon of interest:

The fundamental model of this approach [i.e., human science research or hermeneutic phenomenology] is textual reflection on the lived experiences and practical actions of everyday life with the intent to increase one’s thoughtfulness and practical resourcefulness or tact. (van Manen, 1997, p. 4)

Hermeneutic phenomenology, therefore, gives me permission to retain my teacher-ness, my teacher leader-ness, my researcher-ness, and all the complications of between-ness therein—not as a means of bringing me solipsistic comfort or of avoiding the complicated issue of the researcher’s relationship to the phenomenon that is studied, but as an abiding and committed way into the phenomenon itself. Since the aim of conducting this research is to produce action-oriented language and understandings for teachers’ career growth, it makes sense that the research process itself should allow the teachers who participate—myself included—to present themselves fully and to be disciplined by a clear orientation towards the experience of teacher leadership.

A phenomenological question draws certain methods to itself in the name of that clear orientation. Max van Manen’s (1997) hermeneutic phenomenological process involves six research activities. An important caveat is that these activities are not undertaken in a prescriptive, linear fashion. Phenomenological research is rather a “dynamic interplay” (p. 30) among these activities interpreted according to the phenomenon of interest:

- 1) Turning to a phenomenon which seriously interests us and commits us to the world;
- 2) Investigating experience as we live it rather than as we conceptualize it;
- 3) Reflecting on the essential themes which characterize the phenomenon;
- 4) Describing the phenomenon through the art of writing and reflecting;
- 5) Maintaining a strong and oriented pedagogical relation to the phenomenon; and
- 6) Balancing the research context by considering parts and whole. (pp. 30-31)

A thorough discussion of what they entail is provided in Chapter Three, but it is now appropriate to delve more deeply into what constitutes a turn towards a phenomenon,

i.e., the methodological considerations that underlie my turn towards teacher leadership in this first chapter.

It is well within the tradition of qualitative research for a researcher to disclose preconceptions, previous experiences, and biases. A phenomenological turn certainly has the task of laying those bare, and it also must render the phenomenon visible such that readers either come into a vicarious relationship with it or recognize their own experiences (actual or potential) within the description. The meaning of an experience as it is lived can be found beyond policy and research, and so phenomenology also looks to art, anecdote, etymology, poetry, film, and anywhere else that an evocative rendering of the phenomenon of interest can be found. A turn towards a phenomenon is neither a self-indulgent autobiographical narrative nor an admission of subjective weakness; it simply acknowledges that research “does not start or proceed in a disembodied fashion. It is always a project of someone: a real person, who, in the context of particular individual, social, and historical life circumstances, sets out to make sense of a certain aspect of human existence” (van Manen, 1997, p. 31). Furthermore, phenomenological sense making is a joint effort, because we exist in the world in a fundamentally relational way. Things, people, and ideas concern us. The turn must render the phenomenological question of what a particular experience is like such that the reader begins to wonder about it as well.

If a turn towards a phenomenon is effective, it will evoke more questions than answers, and it will keep both the researcher and the reader as honest as possible. Exposing my experiences with teacher leadership fuels my strong and oriented relation towards it as a phenomenon; the turn is an act of qualitative rigor. I challenge

my own analysis and interpretations because being truly animated by a question (What is it like to be a teacher leader?) “is to interrogate something from the heart of our existence, from the center of our being” (van Manen, 1997, p. 43). The turn is a researcher’s declaration of abiding concern and an invitation to the reader to share in that concern. The turn is, therefore, a starting point and a place that invites our return. Constantly re-turning toward “the thing itself,” a phenomenological exploration finds its center.

Centering in Order to Notice

Phenomenological research delving into the lifeworlds of teacher leaders necessarily and abidingly centers teachers. The coin of the policy realm, though, is currently student achievement. One might ask of me, “If you center the teachers, do you not de-center the students?” For example, a recent advertising campaign by the designer Kenneth Cole captures the sentiment that when teachers advocate for themselves they ignore their students at best, or fight against them at worst. The billboard reads, “Shouldn’t everyone be well red [*sic*]? Teachers’ Rights vs. Students’ Rights” (Heitin, 2012). Spivak (1999) problematizes the assumption that teachers’ and students’ needs are mutually exclusive. She explains that it is possible to center “in order to notice” (p. 322), without dead bolting anything or anyone into position. Furthermore, teachers ought to be able to center themselves:

Remembering ourselves and our power can lead to revolution, but it requires more than recalling a few facts. *Re-membering* involves putting ourselves back together, recovering identity and integrity, reclaiming the wholeness of our lives. When we forget who we are we do not merely drop some data. We *dis-member* ourselves, with unhappy consequences for our politics, our work, our hearts. (Palmer, 1998, p. 20)

It is dangerous to assume teachers' needs are at odds with student needs. Thinking along those lines locks teachers and students into a Darwinian competition for limited resources and also makes teachers feel divided, as I did, when they confront decisions that have complicated ramifications for their own lives and for their students' educational experiences.

We should be asking other questions instead, and hermeneutic phenomenology releases those questions into the conversations around teacher career growth. Further, it releases them into the hands of teachers: "What the phenomenological attitude gives to educators is a certain style of knowing, a kind of theorizing of the unique that sponsors a form of pedagogic practice that is virtually absent in the increasingly bureaucratized and technological spheres of pedagogic life" (van Manen, 1997, p. 154). The goal of phenomenological research can be to effect both personal and systemic changes, because they are inextricably linked in a Freirian (1970/2010) praxis, i.e., reflective action. Experimental research searches for systemic interventions, but "tend[s] to forget that the change we aim for may have different significance for different persons" (p. 7). Policymakers' questions tend to go something like this: "Do educational institutions support the teacher's career, and should they be expected to do so?" (Palmer, 1998, p. 6). Or, as one national level policymaker said in a meeting I attended, "It would be nice to make teachers feel good about themselves, but what's in it for us?" In a phenomenological way, Palmer (1998) turns around the question about institutional benefits and asks, "How can schools educate students if they fail to support the teacher's inner life?" (p. 6). We

must care enough to connect questions about teachers' career paths to the lives of individual teachers, not only school systems, because:

...as important as methods may be, the most practical thing we can achieve in any kind of work is insight into what is happening inside us as we do it. The more familiar we are with our inner terrain, the more surefooted our teaching—and living—becomes. (Palmer, 1998, p. 5)

In asking, "What is this experience like?" hermeneutic phenomenology points the way towards questions that allow teachers' lives to announce themselves rather than be named, and possibly obscured, by others. In short, teachers have the right to center themselves and develop action sensitive understandings of and language for their own felt needs—simply because they are human (Freire, 1970/2010).

If teacher leadership is one means by which teachers try to find fulfillment in their work, then we have an obligation to ask questions about what teachers' experience is like. In a sense, I am not very far from the classroom where I felt bored and struggled to understand my own experience. That classroom is no longer the same place, though. I have "arrived where [I] started / And know the place for the first time" (Eliot, 1922) because I now subject my questions to scrutiny. To "question the questions" (Bartlett, 1990, as quoted by Buker, 2003, p. 79) in a phenomenological way is "a being-given-over to some quest, a true task, a deep questioning" (van Manen, 1997, p. 31). Policies, research questions, and even schools' master schedules could be, and are, constructed to attend to teacher leadership, but educators and researchers—myself included—would be getting ahead of themselves if they believe they know enough about teachers in these roles to move forward. A commitment to that quest for deep questioning and understanding pushes us to question ourselves and others when we think we have "already had much to say

about a phenomenon” (van Manen, 1997, p. 47). Re-turning towards teacher leadership means that the most basic question must first be asked. The question is no longer about how to define teacher leadership; rather, what exactly does the name “teacher leader” call to itself? What is in the name?

What’s in A Name? Questioning “Teacher Leadership”

When we name a thing, we furnish it with a name. But what about this furnishing? After all, the name is not just draped over the thing. On the other hand, no one will deny that the name is coordinated with the thing as an object. . . . More fundamentally, to name is to call something into its word. (Heidegger, 1977/2008g, pp. 389-390)

What is the lived experience of teacher leaders? Rather than begin by delving into aspects of the lived experience, the journey into the question must begin with the name itself: Teacher Leader. If it is properly evocative, a name “aims at letting something show itself” (van Manen, 1997, p. 26). Names do not always bring phenomena out into the open, however. The poet Rilke (2005) writes, “It is frightening to think how many things are made and unmade with words; they are so far removed from us, trapped in their eternal imprecision, indifferent with regard to our most urgent needs; they recoil at the moment when we seize them; they have their life and we have ours” (p. 130). The power of the name can transcend our intentions when we invoke it or when we first connect a word to a phenomenon. Phenomena, the things themselves, can be covered over by the trappings of our daily lives because “the rightness of the name is confirmed by the fact that someone answers to it. Thus it seems to belong to his being” (Gadamer, 1975/2004, p. 406). When teachers answer to “Teacher Leader,” what do they draw into their being?

“Teacher Leader” is both a curious reversal of “lead teacher” and a perplexing hybrid of two identities that can exist on their own, especially in a world of education where “leader” generally refers to administrators. Gee (2005) argues, “Language simultaneously *reflects* reality (“the way things are”) and *constructs* (*construes*) it to be a certain way” (p. 97). Are the teacher leaders already straddling two worlds, or by moving the two words, teacher and leader, together, might we bring the two worlds and the people who occupy them closer together? Bachelard (1964/1994) warns that in the “artificial syntax” of “welded”-together words “one of these terms always weakens the other” (p. 213). What are the consequences of welding instead of weaving worlds? If the joining of terms is too artificial, too forced, instead of joining the worlds in the words, will we “loosen their intimate ties” (Bachelard, p. 213), bring the differences into the foreground, or throw them off balance?

Bachelard (1964/1994) also warns that in philosophy “verbal conglomerates should be avoided [because] there is no advantage to metaphysics for its thinking to be cast in the molds of linguistic fossils” (p. 214). As teachers and principals move into new areas of influence, the separation between ‘teacher’ and ‘leader’ starts to feel old-fashioned, and yet it persists in molding our thinking according to that binary of leader/follower, us/them. I cannot help but think that we use the term “teacher leader” because the world of education does not know what to make of a teacher who is neither here, in the classroom, nor there, in the conference room, because he is in both places at once, defying physics and our vocabulary.

But what, still, is a teacher leader? More than a teacher? More than a leader? Do teachers = teacher leaders - the leadership? I am reminded of how the term

“working mother” fumbles when it tries to explain that it does not mean to imply that stay-at-home mothers do not work. Why do we even name a subset of teachers’ activities at all? Rilke (2005) observes, “We are . . . quite attracted and taken in by names, by titles, by the pretexts of life, because the whole is too infinite and we recover from it only by naming it for a while” (p. 17). Neat names help us to resolve paradoxes. Does the title of “teacher leader” offer sufficient solace to overcome the binary it creates? Should we even seek solace from the tensions that teachers experience?

Ellsworth (1997), like Lampert (1985), believes that the tensions teachers experience do not necessarily require tidy resolution: “When I find myself despairing as a teacher, it’s not the paradoxes of my profession that have brought me down. Usually, what leaves me feeling hopeless is the way that the culture of teaching manages to ignore, deny, or bull its way past its own ironies and impossibilities” (p. 139). Sitting in the tension can be a means of uncovering possibilities, whereas an overly simplistic name can erase or obscure those possibilities. Virginia Woolf’s way of speaking about the binary man/woman is helpful here because she resists the urge to distill the complexities of identity into a single name. If, as Woolf (1929/1981) supposes, a writer “must be woman-manly or man-womanly” (p.104) in order to render in fiction the fullness of life, can we instead conceive of a space in which, for the sake of our students’ possibilities, an educator becomes a “leaderly teacher” or a “teacherly leader?” For Ellsworth (1997) the search for this space is an act of high-stakes postmodern resistance. Her work searches for the third space between teachers and students, but her argument also rings true for teacher leaders:

Who I am as a teacher is *both* teacher and [leader], and who you are as a [leader] is both [leader] and teacher—but this new concept of the “teacher-[leader]” must never be constituted as a third (additive) term, because we must continue troubling every definition of teacher-[leader] that is arrived at. . . . Reading teacher and [leader] through the unconscious or through historical events that exceed simple binary opposition is one way of resisting the illusion of full and complete understanding of the “teacher”-“[leader]” relation. (p. 141)

Ironically, a paradox lies at the heart of using a term like “teacher leader;” it can point to this third space wherein the “both” can dwell, but it can also create an illusion of understanding that prematurely stops the quest for that third space. Perhaps the space between teaching and leading is where educators begin to say to themselves, “We will not be able to teach in the power of paradox until we are willing to suffer the tension of opposites, until we understand that suffering is neither to be avoided or merely to be survived but must be actively embraced for the way it expands our own hearts” (Palmer, 1998, p. 85). The threat and promise of the paradoxical binary persists.

What is that space that is neither the extremes of classroom-dwelling teacher nor of office-dwelling administrator? Is this space between the two worlds of teachers and leaders like the middle of a Venn diagram, a space that is, as Young (2009) describes, “both a doubling and a lack” (p. 87)? As I move to the shared space, I am less of an entire teacher but I am also both teaching and leading. Perhaps the whole of a teacher leader is greater than the sum of the parts. How can that be if a teacher leader is two nouns, two titles, and two roles that typically preclude each other?

Aoki’s (2005c) exploration of dual identity offers some solace and some possibilities:

[Heidegger] advises us not to limit ourselves, not to submit ourselves to mere identity [as teacher or as leader], but to enlarge and to deepen our place of dwelling so that both identity and difference can dwell complementarily. There, he says, would be a human place of openness wherein humans may struggle in their dwelling aright. And it is the quality of this struggle that

really matters. If the foregoing makes sense, a question comes into being: “Is not the reality of our being [teacher leaders] better understood if we were to move beyond the sense of identity to dwell within a twofold of identity and difference?” (p. 354)

The between of teacher+leader becomes greater than the sum of its parts, then, because it folds into its space the differences between teachers and leaders-as-administrators. They come into relief by way of contrast and then into communion, into the fullness of communion that the Latin *communio* invokes, into the fellowship, mutual participation, and sharing that is made possible because we are “teacherly” and “leaderly” together. Turning to Woolf (1929/1981) again, I heed her advice to women that “Anything written with bias is doomed to death. It ceases to be fertilized. Brilliant and effective, powerful and masterly, as it may appear for a day or two, it must wither at nightfall; it cannot grow in the minds of others. Some collaboration [between manly and womanly] has to take place in the mind” (p. 104). Could teacher leadership (or a leader’s teachership) become a third space, somewhere between the world of teachers and the world of administrators, beyond the dichotomy of Us and Them, wherein each comes to understand and appreciate the other?

New Directions: Possibilities and Questions

Dasein always has understood itself and always will understand itself in terms of possibilities. . . . As potentiality-for-Being, understanding is altogether permeated with possibility. (Heidegger, 1962/2008, pp. 185-186)

...[W]omen and men [are] beings who transcend themselves, who move forward and look ahead, for whom immobility represents a fatal threat, for whom looking at the past must only be a means of understanding more clearly what and who they are so that they can more wisely build the future. . . . [People] as beings [are] aware of their incompleteness... (Freire, 1970/2010, p. 84)

Discourse that is intended to reveal something requires that that thing be broken open by the question. (Gadamer, 1975/2004, p. 357)

A space that is open to possibility is also a space of between wherein the known and the unknown co-exist. The sphere who visits Flatland speaks of possibility to the square:

I am in Space, and look down upon the insides of the things of which you only see the outsides. You could leave the Plane yourself, if you could but summon up the necessary volition. A slight upward or downward motion would enable you to see all that I can see. (Abbott, 1884, p. 47)

Teacher leaders could very well swim in the possibilities of spatiality, of the lived, the perceived, and the conceived spaces of their classrooms and schools (Soja, 2009), each informing the other.

What are the possibilities that reside in a third space, somewhere between, over, around the hierarchies that draw borders around the middle ground of teacher leadership? Broken down into its most foundational etymological parts, hierarchy comes from the Greek *hieros* meaning “sacred” and “arkhein, “to lead and rule” (Harper, 2018). In bureaucratic hierarchies and the high-stakes accountability of today’s public schools it can be easy to get lost in the ruling, forgetting that which is sacred, our students. That which we can count and sort is no longer sacred, or, from the Old English *sacres*, it is no longer protected. Our students become commodities and so do our teachers and principals. In moving principals from their original positions as “lead teacher” to what is now essentially a lead administrator they become accountable accountants. Everyone counts and is counted. The origins of ‘count’ uncover what we have lost by counting the worth of teachers, principals, and students. Count comes from the Old French *conter* to “add up,” or “to tell a story.” We certainly remember how to add people up like points and test scores, but we have

forgotten the space for our stories: “Education is suffering from narration sickness” (Freire, 1970/2010, p. 70). We feel the human touch grow weaker and weaker in schools as stories recede, and we understand each other less and less as the “conditions that allow us to listen, to speak, to learn” (Palmer, 1998, p. 154) deteriorate. In not understanding administrators as storied selves, teachers more easily see administrators as Them, the ones who make decisions for us, at us, and on us. Perhaps the teachers and administrators in the third space of educational leadership might begin to know each other through story. In recounting the story, the third space becomes sacred, protected space in which storied selves come into each other’s presence.

The third space of leadership becomes a place not just for teachers, but also for administrators-turned-lead-teachers. Teacher leadership primarily belongs to teachers, but if we accept a more fluid third space then administrators can move into the space without being demoted or losing authority. The third space is a middle ground where cultures represent possibilities not dis-abilities (McDermott & Varenne, 1995). Teachers and administrators can go beyond seeing the other as Other, where they can come into relation with each other, and can also begin to see themselves as Others. Bachelard (1964/1994) observes, “Sometimes, it is in being outside itself that being tests consistencies” (p. 215). In being outside oneself, it is less likely that solutions to problems will be sought in the actions of others, but can instead be situated collectively. According to Palmer (1998), the leader “who opens, rather than occupies, space . . . becomes better able to open spaces in which people feel invited to create communities of mutual support” (p. 161). It is only in seeing oneself as an

object that we can assess what needs to change, and it is only in retaining our sense of self as a subject that we have the power to make that change. The third space opens us up to our own presence and to the presence of the other teachers and principals.

Looking back at the flat world below, we get a better view of our classrooms, our students, our institutions. Perhaps what we think is solid has innards, lying in wait to be open and exposed to our view. At once looking in and being looked at, we see borders become more permeable, obstacles become less towering, patterns become more discernible, truths become questionable. Dwelling in the third space of educational leadership lets us see more of the world that our children, teachers, and administrators belong to, and lets us envision maneuvers in directions that would not have been possible otherwise.

The policy environment and research agenda surrounding teachers is filled with new borders on top of old borders: teacher career ladders, career lattices, teacher leadership standards, differentiated roles as coaches, department chairs, team leaders, and professional learning communities; distributed leadership, shared leadership, professional learning communities, school improvement, and role negotiation. Is the creation of another level on an already top-heaving organizational chart a full rendering of what it means to occupy these hybrid spaces—and all of the accompanying resistance and liberation—in which teachers are of and above their colleagues? Awakening the possibilities that reside in the third space is to awaken the place where “old connections can be disturbed and new ones emerge” (Soja, 2009, p. 56), where difference cultivates, not stymies. If Heidegger (1962/2008) is correct that “in [our] potentiality-for-Being [we are] therefore delivered over to the possibility of

first finding [ourselves] again in [our] possibilities” (p. 184), then perhaps it is in this space that teachers can reawaken the “two consistent motions [of] their soul” (Pope, 1891) now reinterpreted slightly: the one that regards itself, its life inside a classroom, and the one that regards the whole, its life within the worlds that contain, nestle, and jostle the classroom. And so I continue to turn toward teacher leadership: What is the lived experience of teachers as they dwell in teacher leadership, as they come into the presence of their own possibilities?

A Path Toward Pedagogical Insights

Chapter One marks the beginning of the journey into a phenomenological understanding of teachers’ lived experiences of teacher leadership. The study must maintain a fundamentally humanizing relationship with teachers as it seeks deeper understandings and language that resonate with teachers and with which readers can engage. Ultimately, the study is a phenomenological path towards action-sensitive insights and language that could allow teachers to come more fully into themselves as we push on the boundaries of what we know and how we talk about teacher leadership, and as we reorient towards the relationships we have with the teachers in our care. To that end, each chapter presents different facets of the phenomenon.

Chapter Two seeks the lived meaning of teacher leadership. It also seeks to understand how those lived meanings are both made visible and concealed by the sources to which we typically turn, including research literature. These preliminary investigations begin to cut a path towards understanding the meaning of teacher leadership as it is lived instead of what merely seems to be. Chapter Three delves more deeply into hermeneutic phenomenology as a methodology born from

ontological questions and outlines the methods of this study. Anchored in the thinking of Heidegger, Gadamer, Freire, and van Manen, the chapter allows questions to emerge about teachers' ways of being in the world and about the language they have to draw these named possibilities into their being. And finally, the plan for conducting the study is explained. In Chapter Four we listen to what teachers say about their lifeworlds, experienced through the role of "teacher leader." The conversations that form the crux of the study become the focus of hermeneutic thematizing. In Chapter Five, I share pedagogical insights that present themselves as a result of the study's explorations into how teacher leadership is experienced in body, time, place, and relationship with others. I suggest new horizons for teachers' careers that can be brought into being.

Flyvbjerg (2006) offers a description of how readers interact with case study research, which is also applicable to hermeneutic phenomenology:

The opposite of summing up and "closing" . . . is to keep it open. . . . The goal is not to . . . be all things to all people. The goal is to allow the study to be different things to different people. . . . Readers will have to discover their own path. (p. 238)

Success in this study does not consist of proving something about teacher leadership, but rather of understanding better the teachers who enact it, pushing the boundaries of the language we have for what we currently name teacher leadership, and of sparking teachers' efforts to envision and enact new possibilities for themselves.

It is only appropriate, therefore, to close this chapter with an opening that "press[es] forward into possibilities" (Heidegger, 1962/2008, p. 184) that push us up and out, possibilities that are greater than ourselves. Our humble, adventurous, and restless two-dimensional square from Flatland addresses us as fellow beings who

know there are other dimensions, and that we are *in* them, but not yet entirely *of* them:

This Work is Dedicated
By a Humble Native of Flatland
In the Hope that
Even as he was Initiated into the Mysteries
Of THREE DIMENSIONS
Having been previously conversant
With ONLY TWO
So the Citizens of that Celestial Region
May aspire yet higher and higher
To the Secrets of FOUR FIVE or EVEN SIX Dimensions
Thereby contributing
To the Enlargement of THE IMAGINATION
And the possible Development
Of that most and excellent Gift of MODESTY... (Abbott, 1884, p. 1)

CHAPTER TWO: EXPLORING AND UNNAMING THE PHENOMENON OF TEACHER LEADERSHIP

As I engage in this inquiry, I have been out of the classroom for almost ten years. I am still licensed to teach high school English language arts in Virginia, and my National Board Certification is current. I am a full-time doctoral candidate and lead standards and assessment departments at the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. My work with university students and for the National Board affords me the opportunity to be with teachers on a regular basis. I spend most of my time facilitating spaces in which teachers engage in professional learning and make nuanced decisions about the standards and scoring for National Board Certification that will affect teachers across the country. I feel deeply responsible for teachers, but have no idea how to answer the simple question, “What do you do?” Teacher, teacher leader, former teacher, “has been” teacher—they do not fit, and I am unnamed.

One occasion working with a group of teachers stands out to me. I was in a conference room with five other teachers. The charge I had given them (as a National Board staff member) was to develop a set of competencies that beginning teacher leaders ought to practice. I was technically their facilitator, but they often asked me to participate, share my experiences, ask questions, and make comments. At one point, one of the teachers asked another how he would handle a particular kind of situation. He replied, “Since I work in the district office now, I’m not a teacher leader anymore. What I think about this doesn’t matter.” Without thinking I added, “Neither am I.” The group stared at both of us in silence. I quietly added, “I don’t know what I am.”

The group told us we are teacher leaders. Why? What about the two of us transcended our job titles and physical distance from schools and then compelled the other teachers to claim us as one of them? The next week I received an email from one of the members of the group:

Thank you for being an amazing facilitator and model teacher leader for us! I was thinking about how you both said you don't see yourselves as teacher leaders. Who am I to tell you both how to feel, but I think your "classroom" and "students" have changed. The impact of your work guiding committees I have worked with is certainly having a profound influence on my students. Everywhere you write and say "you," I read and hear as "we."

His words moved me to tears; I was so grateful and relieved to still be "we." I helped him and his students. My colleagues re-named me. Curiously we had spent days discussing the fit of the teacher leader name. Each of them had to wrestle with accepting that title and come to terms with using it to describe themselves. They used it now as a way of announcing my membership in their community. I then had the horrible realization that I felt like an imposter. Did I trick them into seeing me that way?

The email from my colleague mentions classroom, students, influence on another teacher's students, and influence on a fellow teacher. Those are certainly teacher spaces and relationships, even though I no longer experience them within a school. I worried I was putting up some kind of façade, clinging to my teacher-ness while I struggled with whether I still had the right to or not. In Heideggerian language I might say I wondered if I was showing myself as something I am not. Did I merely *seem* like a teacher leader while my true self cowered in the shadows? Heidegger reminds me that I should go easy on myself and also ask if I cast the appearance of a teacher leader because I was one. Is that what those five teachers sensed?

The research literature identifies many roles, responsibilities and characteristics of teacher leaders. In that moment, however, I acknowledged that my colleagues were teacher leaders not because of their school roles, but because they were able to see through my appearance to my authentic self, even when I could not. I now wonder if the call to teacher leadership is experienced as a vision of the authentic beings of the teachers around them. How do teacher leaders sense and experience teachers and students? What appearances do they see and see through? How do they find their way?

In Chapter One I explored how I found my way to the call of the phenomenon of teacher leadership, how and why it makes me wonder about the significance of experiencing it. In it I question, as an act of hermeneutic rigor, my own experiences and assumptions in order to remain steadfastly attuned to the phenomenon. I also strove to open a space of wonder about teacher leadership that I could inhabit with you, the reader. In Chapter Two I search for what we can uncover through an existential exploration of the lived experience of teacher leadership.

The tradition of hermeneutic phenomenology offers me guiding questions and principles for this search (van Manen, 1997, 2014). First and foremost, this chapter seeks out the ways in which teacher leadership experiences have been both revealed and concealed in order to render the phenomenon as it is lived. Educational theory and research can sometimes shed light on the lived experience of teacher leadership, but more often it conceals the meaning of our experiences. It is designed to answer other questions. Accordingly, this chapter is not led by research trends and a literature review, but instead by how teachers experience time, spaces, others, and their own

bodies when they are living that which we call teacher leadership. The second guiding principle is, therefore, this question as van Manen (1997, 2014) might write it: How can the existentials of lived relation, body, space, time, and thing guide us in exploring the meaning of the experience of teacher leadership? While the phenomenon itself will determine the organization of the chapter, these existentials serve as prompts for reflection and writing, and as a guardrail for maintaining my orientation towards the phenomenon.

The third guiding principle is to remain open to the myriad sources that can serve as a focus for reflection and writing. Hermeneutic phenomenology requires texts that bring forward experiences of relation, body, space, time, and things and, therefore, act as “objects for phenomenological reflection and analysis” (van Manen, 2014, p. 249). Those textual descriptions can be drawn from literature and the arts; from “empirical material drawn from life, such as anecdotes, stories, fragments, aphorisms, metaphors, memories, riddles, and sayings” (p. 248); from interview, observation, written accounts, and other social science data. The object of phenomenology is the lifeworld, and so texts that are both a product of the lifeworld and that seek to describe it are all possible sources of phenomenological “data.” Not every text contains material from which phenomenological descriptions can be drawn, however. It must be “experientially descriptive” and “avoid empirical material that mostly consists of perceptions, opinions, beliefs, views, and so on” (p. 350). Texts that are appropriate for hermeneutic phenomenological analysis and reflection must tell us something about what it *means* to have this or that experience of teacher leadership.

Teacher Leadership as a Name that Covers

Humans categorize. Categories help us make sense of the world. Any phenomenon, as the object of phenomenology, must contend with and eschew those categories in order to understand lived, pre-conceptual meaning. Teacher leadership, as a product of policy and bureaucracies in schools, is acutely confined by categories and ways of thinking that we must acknowledge and then question in order to reflect on the lived experience. Early uses of the term “teacher leader” or “teacher leadership” show that it was employed for various uses and that it was not until later that it referred to a recognizable body of work by teachers. In 1917, Foght used “teacher-leadership” to refer to the ways rural teachers could “reorganize schools and reorganize communities” (p. 6). In 1930, Hopkins used “teacher leadership” to describe an alternative to “teacher dominance” of students. In 1947, Bahn, a teacher, wrote a piece urging administrators to tap into the individual strengths of teachers and continuously search for “teacher leadership” opportunities to ensure teachers feel valued and secure. By the 1980s the concept of educational leadership more often includes teachers, and the seminal 1986 report *A Nation Prepared* (Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, 1986) envisions organizational structures in schools where lead teachers take on responsibilities. The sense that teachers have transformative power has been in the air for some time.

The rationales have ranged from philosophical or systems-based perspectives to a focus on the experience of the individual teacher. They have evolved throughout reform periods (Little, 2003) from a “first wave” that situated teacher leadership within formal hierarchies at a ladder rung close to the classroom (e.g., teachers as

department chairs), to a second wave that “separated out leadership from the teaching function” (Pounder, 2006, p. 534) (e.g., teachers become curriculum supervisors), to a third wave that conceptualizes teacher leadership as a process by which practicing teachers should be able to “express their leadership capabilities” (p. 534). Pounder goes on to argue we are in the midst of a fourth wave in which teachers can be transformational classroom leaders in school and university contexts. Here is a sample of the justifications offered for teacher leadership initiatives in schools in the past decade or so. The teacher in me must bear the cumulative weight of these justifications.

Those who look to successful educational systems such as Singapore and Finland cite the reliance of those systems on teachers’ professional judgment (Wei, Darling-Hammond, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009). Some rationales are rooted in findings that teachers are the most significant school-based factor on student learning (Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2005); their expertise is therefore critical for the implementation and sustainability of school-based reforms and for instructional leadership (Birky, Shelton, & Headley, 2006; Wood, 2007). Some rationales are tethered to the belief that education, as the foundation of a democratic society, ought to be characterized by democratic schools that nurture the growth and learning of everyone—students and faculty alike (Grossman, Wineburg, & Woolworth, 2001; Mullen & Jones, 2008; S. P. Scribner & Bradley-Levine, 2010).

Those who are interested in school leadership investigate teachers’ leadership practices in the context of distributed theories of leadership and models of shared leadership (Leander & Osborne, 2008; Spillane et al., 2004). At times teacher

leadership is investigated as a group phenomenon in which the unit of analysis is a teacher team or professional learning community (Curry, 2008; J. P. Scribner, Sawyer, Watson, & Myers, 2007); at other times the individual teacher leader within a shared leadership context is the unit of analysis (Donaldson et al., 2008; Smylie & Brownlee-Conyers, 1992).

Teacher leadership is often invoked as a potential means for solving the quandary (at best) or crisis (at worst) of teacher retention. A common finding in the retention literature is that the shortage of teachers is more due to the inability of schools to retain teachers than their ability to find new ones (Ingersoll, 2001; Liu, 2007; Margolis, 2008). Teacher leadership is accordingly offered as a means of connecting teachers with the psychic rewards that will ensure their job satisfaction (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009; Lortie, 1975/2002), especially through the mid-career “second stage” in which teachers have attained a sound level of expertise but risk running out of options for applying and deepening that expertise (Berg et al., 2005; Fiarman, 2007; Huberman, 1989; Kirkpatrick, 2007).

Akin to rationales that link teacher leadership to teachers’ job satisfaction, teacher professionalization often forms the basis for arguments that teachers’ spheres of influence should not be confined to their own classrooms (Barth, 2001; Darling-Hammond, 1985; Ingersoll, 2007). According to this line of thought, the benefits of teacher leadership extend beyond the satisfaction of individual teachers to their students and education systems in general. Wood (2007) argues that “no recipe for change could promise more than the revitalization and empowerment of those whose work directly affects what children actually experience in their classrooms—their

teachers” (p. 737). A related claim is that teacher leadership is “essentially a form of job-embedded professional development” (Poekert, 2012, p. 185) that provides growth opportunities, is guided by teachers’ own professional judgment, and leads to positive impacts on both the teacher leaders’ and their colleagues’ practices.

We know a lot about teacher leadership and know a lot of questions to ask next. That is the problem. Teacher leadership has been thought about for so long and by so many that our familiarity with it hides our unfamiliarity with the teachers who live it. The problem is not that we miss the forest for the trees; the problem is that we can no longer see the person who is the teacher for all of the theories. As van Manen (1997) explains, “The problem of phenomenological inquiry is not always that we know too little about the phenomenon we wish to investigate, but that we know too much” (p. 46). Teacher leadership has deep roots in various movements, and the language that accompanies each wave makes teacher leadership what it is in schools today. With all the established points of view, frameworks, embedded vocabularies, and experimental approaches towards leadership, we must take a moment to ask, what is the *lived* experience of teacher leadership? What does it mean for teachers to live this portion of their career under the name “teacher leadership?” This chapter aims, therefore, to wonder about teacher leadership as it is described and lived by teachers—an orientation that calls for seeing the known anew.

Unnaming Teacher Leadership

“Unless you are *being* a teacher leader, it doesn’t matter what people call you. . . . and I think people that you teach with recognize that. They understand that you *are*.” (teacher quoted in Margolis & Deuel, 2009, p. 276)

“Okay, what does everybody think I am?” (teacher quoted in Margolis, 2012, p. 301)

If teacher leadership is dominated by constructs and categories—and if teacher leadership is itself such a category—then getting behind, under, or even away from the name “teacher leader” might allow us to come into closer contact with the lived experience of teachers working with other teachers. Interestingly, in several studies on teacher leadership the researchers note that the teachers usually did not name themselves or even other teachers as “teacher leaders” (Angelle & DeHart, 2011; Fairman & Mackenzie, 2012, 2015; Hatch, White, & Faigenabum, 2005; Margolis, 2008; Murphy, Smylie, Mayrowetz, & Louis, 2009; S. P. Scribner & Bradley-Levine, 2010). How does taking on or avoiding the name “teacher leader” affect teachers’ experiences of the work that receives that moniker? Guidance offered by van Manen (2014) points us toward the power of unnamings:

Reflecting on words and names helps us to realize how closely related language is to thinking and to our ways of being in the world. But what occurs when we unname things is a question that is rarely asked. . . . By putting [names] aside or by making them transparent we can orient to the world as if we were removing “a clear barrier” that stands between us and our lived experiences. Certainly we would not be able to take things for granted as we usually do. (p. 387)

A true name can help open us to meaningful relationships, yet names can also clog our abilities to see clearly. They let us slip into complacency.

In those last sentences, van Manen alludes to a short story by Ursula La Guin (1985), “She Unnames Them.” Eve takes back the names given to the animals, and most accept their namelessness because the names never meant much to them in the first place. Clearing the slate changes their relationships to each other and to the lifeworld. After the unnamings, Eve experiences the animals as “far closer than when their names had stood between [her] and them like a clear barrier” (p. 27). She no

longer has to see them through their names.

Next Eve unnames herself. As she walks away from Adam, she cannot describe where she is going or the animals she will see. She stammers. The names are gone, and she has an epiphany:

I had only just then realized how hard it would have been to explain myself. I could not chatter away as I used to do, taking it all for granted. My words must be as slow, as new, as single, as tentative as the steps I took going down the path away from the house, between the dark-branched, tall dancers motionless against the winter shining. (p. 27)

Unnaming makes language and living more difficult, more unsettled, more staccato, but also more open to the possibilities of language that describes the experience. No longer having ready-made names at her disposal, Eve cannot say quickly and unreflectively, “I’m walking between the trees in the snow.” The opportunity to search for new language allows us to become closer to her experience, just as she has to be closer to her own if she is to find the right words. We sense the stillness and the chill in the air, her slow movement among the dark branches, and the brightness of the light reflecting off the snow and ice. The trees are now more than background objects that exist to establish Eve’s path. The trees are dancers who, in this moment with the winter and with Eve, choose to be still. Might releasing ourselves from the chatter of teacher leadership allow us to choose new words and find new ways of noticing what teachers experience? Might we grow closer to teachers who are named Teacher Leader? If trees become dancers when we listen, how might we experience teachers when we listen to them name themselves?

Teachers have been given many names by researchers, policymakers, and school system leaders. They answer to instructional coach, department chair, team

leader, peer reviewer, professional development coordinator, teacher leader, mentor teacher, master teacher. How do these names feel? When Eve unnames the animals, they release the “qualifiers that had trailed along behind them . . . like tin cans tied to a tail” (p. 27) and then they drift, crawl, swim, fly, and walk away free from the names donated to them. Eve, as the namer, also walks away lighter. How do researchers, policymakers, and administrators bear their responsibility for the name “teacher leader?” False names can constrain the named and the namer both.

Many studies describe the reluctance of teachers to take up the name “teacher leader” as a kind of resistance to accepting authority or expertise of other teachers.

This passage is representative:

The findings of this study indicate that teachers continue to be reluctant or ambivalent about being regarded as ‘leaders,’ in that they did not want to take on formal titles of leadership and seemed to prefer working through informal channels to effect change. Some recognized that their work was leading change in their schools, but others did not really understand the leadership potential in their work, and just saw it as being ‘what we do.’ Labeling the work teachers do as ‘leadership’ may, in fact, discourage teacher involvement in leadership activity because teachers’ conception of leadership comes from a more traditional model of formally designated roles and specific responsibilities and because of the persistence of egalitarian norms in teaching. (Fairman & Mackenzie, 2012, p. 244)

Research into the nature of teacher interactions over the course of leadership activities importantly touches on the distance teachers feel between the work that feels natural to them and the title of “teacher leader.” The general education zeitgeist, however, glosses over this insight. It sees teacher leadership as a positive change and so works tirelessly to fix teachers’ perceptions, to help them—those who “did not really understand”—get past the stubborn barriers of egalitarianism, and to help them leave their ignorance of leadership behind.

This is one way the name “teacher leader” conceals: in not taking *leadership* up, teaching becomes a lack of leadership, an inability, or “just” teaching. This implication seeps into teachers’ consciousness. Some titles of blogs written by teachers on edweek.org are examples: “The Key to Moving from Teaching to Leading,” or “A Step-by-Step Guide to Battle ‘Crabs in a Bucket’ Syndrome.” Yet the teachers in these studies do not eschew the mission of effecting positive change in schools; they simply announce that they do so in their being as a teacher. If teachers say that what others call leadership is really “what they do” as a part of their being as teachers, then those experiences must be understood, not explained away as resistance to the ideal that others have established for them. Viewing teachers’ beings through the screen of a false name, even if the name is given as a gift, creates the same “clear barrier” that Adam and Eve erect between themselves and the animals.

The teachers in the studies who say, “it’s not leadership, it’s just what we do,” remind me of the yaks in Le Guin’s (1985) story. When they are told they could renounce their names, they protest:

They said that “yak” sounded right, and that almost everyone who knew they existed called them that. . . . They discussed the matter all summer. The councils of elderly females finally agreed that though the name might be useful to others it was so redundant from the yak point of view that they never spoke it themselves and hence might as well dispense with it. . . . Their agreement was reached and the designation “yak” was returned to the donor. (p. 27)

There is something enticing about the name to them. It does capture some essence of their being, yet the name does not resonate with them. True names let creatures announce themselves; false names are convenient for others. Would teachers return the designation “teacher leader” if they could? Are “teacher” and “teacher leader”

redundant? As much as research, systems, and policies like to think of teacher leadership as a new career phase upon which certain teachers embark, we must pause and listen to teachers. What is it like to be called by students and fellow teachers alike?

Being-With as a Mode of Existence Among Teachers

When I think about what it means to be called by another such that I am summoned to care with all of my being, I am reminded of teaching my students, of guiding and collaborating with teachers, and of mothering my children. Of all the paintings done by Mary Cassatt (1880), *Mother and Child* best captures, for me, what it means to be called by another in such an all-consuming way.



When I showed this painting to my six-year-old daughter, she said she can tell they are mother and child. Whether they are happy or whether the mother is comforting a sad child, she said this is a private moment in a private place, and we should not be watching. We both then wondered if the mother and child even notice us observing them. They seem to be aware of no one but each other. The way the mother and child

call to each other is so consuming that all else is excluded. The setting blurs for them as much as the impressionism blurs it for us. It becomes a painting not only about mother and child, but also one that evokes being-with as a mode of existence. The mother and child turn towards each other to be sure, but they also turn towards being-with-each-other. They give themselves over to it.

Being with a child as a mother is not the same relationship as being with another mother's child as that child's teacher. And yet, there is something about this painting that speaks to me about the way I turned towards my students. When I gave myself over to being-with in the classroom with my students, the rest of the world blurred. The soreness of my feet, the buzz of the lights, the dinner I likely will not have the energy to cook for my family that night, the gaze of an observing administrator, the whining tantrum of the stack of ungraded papers—they all faded into the distance.

A teacher leader has the job of positively impacting that relationship, the moments when teachers and students turn towards one another. I realize that if I step out of the position of mother or teacher in the painting and replant myself in the shoes of the painter's onlooker, I feel somewhat like I did as a teacher leader. My daughter and I realized quickly that Cassatt's mother and child are turned away from us. Their relationship does not require us. In fact, to allow space for us would require their separation, an eye cast over a shoulder in our direction. I feel guilty for asking the mother in the painting to even consider my presence. All that exists for her in that moment is the feel of her child's skin and little hands on her neck, the smell of her baby's head, and the weight of her body pressed into her chest. Who am I to ask the

mother and child to pull me from distance to nearness?

When I stood outside of a fellow teacher's classroom about to conduct an observation as a mentor teacher, I similarly felt guilty. Behind that door was a space of being-with between the teacher and her students. To open the door meant that they would turn away from each other and towards me. It felt selfish. I finally turned the door handle when I realized that this beginning teacher might not yet have created a space of being-with. What if the classroom space was one in which they were not turned toward each other? Faces turned away from each other announced an invitation, because they were already glancing over their shoulders in my direction. I could not ignore this possibility. It was a call to enter the room and create a relationship among me, the teacher, and the students such that the teacher and students could so turn into each other that I would ultimately render myself invisible. I realized that I had no choice but to feel responsible for whatever was happening behind that door.

If Cassatt's painting helps me see a teacher with a student and helps me orient myself as a teacher leader to that relationship, I wonder what it would look like to paint being-with between two teachers. How is the being-with between a teacher leader and another teacher different than two teachers together chatting casually about this or that? What if the difference lies not in whether or not one teacher is called a teacher leader, but in the nature of the mode of being in which both teachers find themselves?

Heidegger (1962/2008) describes being-with as a part of who we are as beings in the world. We are fundamentally with each other. As such, being-with happens in

different ways. Indifference and intimacy would be two opposing kinds. Indifference is not a relationship in which there is no being-with; it is a form of being-with in which side-by-side people are not aware of each other. Cassatt's painting, however, shows us a kind of being-with in which people give themselves over to one another completely, the kind of being-with that teachers seek with their students and that teachers require amongst themselves if they are to devote themselves to pedagogy together. Research literature tries to understand how teacher leaders can improve relationships with colleagues marked by indifference or even antagonism. What if what we call "teacher leadership" does not exist except where intimate being-with is the teachers' mode of existence—whether someone called "teacher leader" is trying to lead or not? Van Manen poses a question to prompt his readers' reflection on the kind of teacher-child relationship that pedagogy inspires: "What makes a certain situation or relation with a child pedagogical rather than something else?" (van Manen, 2002, p. 55). The same question can be refocused slightly—What makes a certain situation or relation *between or among teachers* pedagogical rather than something else? This restatement can help us think about the kind of teacher-teacher relationship that would exist in the name of pedagogy, the kind of being-with that requires teachers to give themselves over to one another in pedagogy's embrace.

Intimacy

The moment in *Mother and Child 7*, like moments between teachers who are deeply engaged together around those moments shared by teacher and student, is a private, all-consuming answer to another's need. Intimacy uses moments such as those to announce its presence. As I wrote about the kind of being-with Cassatt

evokes, I realized I resisted the language of intimacy that wanted to appear on the page. We shun language of intimacy in public spaces (including dissertations, apparently) and especially in schools. Etymologically, intimacy stems from the Latin *intimatus*, “make known, announce, impress,” and from *intimus*, which means “inmost” in its adjective form or “close friend” as a noun (Harper, 2018). “Intimacy” as close physical, sexual contact dominates modern usage; however, intimacy has its roots in the kind of closeness that comes from being-with-another such that they are deeply concerned for and understand one another. In intimate moments we make our true selves known. Our being announces itself and even presses itself on the persons with us who are, likewise, asking us to accept them. It is an even exchange in which both are sharing and receiving their authentic selves. There is no room for semblance in intimate moments. The intimacy between two teachers during an exchange that we might call teacher leadership can only happen between two people who are teachers in their being and who have given themselves over to each other and to pedagogy.

Max van Manen (2002) shows us that teachers learn that pedagogy is really tact and thoughtfulness, a way of seeing a child such that the child experiences being seen in his own world, his own place, and in his own time. Do teachers also develop this kind of tact and thoughtfulness towards each other—is that the intimacy between teachers? Examine this moment between teacher and student that often takes place at the classroom door:

The moment of the physical or verbal handshake is the moment of the teacher being there for the child, and the child for the teacher. In each true encounter there is a moment of mutuality that shuts out the rest of the world. In it lies the possibility of genuine interpersonal contact. As our hands or smiling faces respond to the gesture of each other’s approach, we create shared space. The smile is experienced as an invitation to openness. Our eyes meet, and for an

instant we are there only for each other. (p. 33)

The teacher and student both experience the intimacy of being there for the other such that the rest of the world is shut out. They recognize each other in truth as Teacher and Student. Teachers meet each other in similarly open and honest ways, recognizing that they are there for each other and for the children in their care. How do teachers experience true encounters with other teachers? What is it like for teachers when they turn towards their pedagogical responsibility to take care of each other as teachers?

Intimacy is usually reserved for private moments and spaces, or even pockets of privacy within public spaces. Schools, on the other hand, are designed as nests for group interactions. Classrooms and teachers' planning areas hold dozens of people. Policies, laws, and school schedules have to consider teachers and students en masse. I wonder how policies and reforms designed to create teacher leadership roles at the systems level affect teachers who seek to make themselves known to each other in more intimate, pedagogically-centered ways. What is it like for teachers to enter public teacher leadership roles wearing the "shopworn ideas" of the school system (Tuan, 1977, p. 146)? How do teachers experience intimate exchanges born out of systemic expectation? Tuan realizes that experiences of being-with are inextricably linked to space. Intimacy requires us to forego programs and buildings designed for the large scale in favor of the private details, such as "what we see out of the corner of our eye and the sensation of the almost frigid sunlight behind us" (p. 147). How do teachers come to notice the subtle details that bring them to themselves and to each other in the face of "the most obvious and public aspects of an environment" (p. 146),

including the expectations and pressures that come with teacher leadership job titles?

Time

Time also presses on teachers. The common refrain in faculty lounges is, “There isn’t enough time.” In numerous studies teacher leaders report that time is a significant factor in how they experience and execute their leadership and, if applicable, classroom responsibilities (e.g., Fiarman, 2007; Hatch et al., 2005; Margolis, 2012; York-Barr & Duke, 2004). It might seem as though teacher leaders simply require more time or fewer, more manageable tasks for the time they do have (Wood, 2007). The question is not, however, how much time do teacher leaders need for their jobs? The question is how do teachers who have given (or want to give) themselves over to being-with-other-teachers experience or feel time?

Teachers in formal leadership roles often refer to time. Researchers report that teachers feel pulled between classroom and leadership roles, divided amongst multiple top priorities, and unsure of where their job description ends and someone else’s begins. Teacher leaders in one particular study talk about “hazy time” and “wasted time” (Margolis, 2012, p. 308). They go on to report feeling “splintered,” “like they were not doing any part of their job to satisfaction.” They endured “wasted time” and time spent overwhelmed to the point of “freezing,” or even hiding from others, as a strategy to find time in which they could “focus on a single item . . . amidst a swirl of initiatives.” These teachers were “always on the run.” They felt like time was not their own.

They experienced the kind of teacher leadership constructed for them by their schools, not the intimate, authentic being-with-other-teachers illustrated by Cassatt.

Teacher leadership was thrust upon them in the system's image. Heidegger's (1962/2008) description of a man caught up in inauthentic work is apt: "Busily losing *himself* in the object of his concern, he *loses his time* in it too. Hence his characteristic way of talking—"I have no time"" (p. 463). When teachers must understand their time in the ways schools regulate it, they "[do] *not* know this 'time' as *[their] own*, but concernfully *utilize* the time which 'there is'" (p. 464). On the contrary, teachers who experience meaningful relationships with fellow teachers oriented towards pedagogy—relationships in which they give themselves over to each other—will always "have" time. The "resoluteness" of the "moment of vision" they share gives them all the time in the world (p. 463). They *make time*. The clatter of bell schedules and flurry of motion fades into the background—much like my sore feet did when I surrendered to being-with-my-students. Perhaps this need to send distractions into the distance to clear the path for authentic relationships is what Donny Hathaway (1971) meant when he sang, "I love you in a place where there's no space or time." Only there and then, when teachers have the freedom to bring near those who will answer pedagogy's call with them, can intimacy dwell.

Distance

Authentic being-with among teachers depends on closeness. Tuan (1977) explains that across cultures, "'distance' connotes degrees of accessibility and also of concern. Human beings are interested in other people and in objects of importance to their livelihood. They want to know whether the significant others are far or near with respect to themselves and to each other" (p. 46). Teacher leaders seek nearness to other teachers, to be sure, and they also feel pulled towards students. Teachers I know

who take on roles outside the classroom are always quick to say, “I miss the kids, but I know that in this job I can make things better for more children than the number of children I’d have in my classroom.” Being far away does not automatically preclude a feeling of nearness, just as proximity does not necessarily engender a sense of closeness. We can ask a loved one next to us, “Where are you right now?” As van Manen (2002) points out, “Similarly, we may be physically absent from children while in a different sense they remain present in our lives after school, and we remain present to them” (p. 59). Being a teacher is to be present in students’ lives, because “a teacher who gives up on a child, who no longer knows how to have a sense of hope for that child, immediately steps back from being a teacher” (p. 65). When I stepped out of the classroom, I did so out of hope for helping teachers and their students, but I wondered if the physical separation from the classroom meant that I was giving up. I imagine the students surrounding every teacher I work with, but does it count if the teacher’s students do not see me?

Max van Manen (2000) asks me to consider the possibility that it can. A profound sense of responsibility and caring for students keeps teachers attached to them:

It is because a teacher feels addressed by the ‘faces’ of particular students, about whom he or she worries, that the teacher can remain sensitive to the sometimes ‘faceless’ multitude of all the other students for whom he or she is responsible . . . Only by remaining attuned to our sense of unique responsibility can we insert into our professional ethical practices the general responsibility of caring in all its various modalities that our vocations require. (p. 326)

In order to care for teachers, a teacher must first and continually care for students. As teachers seek this attunement to the faces and the faceless, how do they experience

the expanding and contracting distances around them—distances between them and their past students, their current students (if they have them), the future students they will never have, the teachers in their care, those teachers’ students? Teacher leadership is a space wherein teachers turn towards each other in search of better and better pedagogy. Is it a space where, in turning towards each other, they remain oriented towards students? What is it like to hold faceless students close, as students they have known recede into the distance? What is it like for the teacher leader without a classroom who wonders, How far away can students go before I have stepped back from being a teacher?

The Beings in Being-With

To state the obvious, teacher leadership is a mode of being-with among *teachers*. What makes someone a teacher though? What inspires one established teacher to give the nod of professional recognition to another? There is consensus in the research literature and other teacher leadership communities that teacher leaders must be “competent, credible, and approachable” (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009, p. 14); competence in the classroom is a prerequisite for earning credibility as a teacher leader. The ways teachers experience each other make a fleeting appearance in findings like these—there is something about the way teachers see each other that affects the kind of being-with they have with each other. Instead of asking what credentials teachers must have to increase the likelihood of their effectiveness in formal and informal teacher leader roles, I wonder what it is like for one teacher to be open enough and sensitive enough to another teacher that the space opens for

intimacy in the name of pedagogy. What is the significance of that relationship for the teachers who live it?

Teachers greet previously unknown, yet titled, “teacher leaders” with skepticism. Until this new teacher-as-teacher-leader becomes a credible teacher, he or she will likely not be accepted. One teacher I spoke with described her first experiences as a professional development leader in a new school as “forging a path” from, “Who’s this little girl to tell me what to do?” toward “credibility” (R. Smith, recorded conversation, April 11, 2011). One way of understanding what it means to be a teacher in front of other teachers is to start by asking what it is like for one teacher to *not* believe in someone else’s teacherness.

Seeming Like a Teacher

JoAnne Pagano (1990) wonders about believability and pedagogy. She describes an experience she had when she did not believe her student:

I don’t believe you. I say this, reading a student journal, a journal written by a student who has figured out quite clearly what I’m looking for. I don’t believe you. Your story does not ring true. You talk abstractly . . . You don’t know what it means. You’re smug. I’m angry. It means nothing to you. Your language is corrupt. (p. 89)

This moment is less about a teacher thinking her student lied than it is about a teacher believing that this person in her class has lied about being her student. It is a question of being and of false appearances, a betrayal of the intimacy that exists between teacher and student. This moment causes me and Pagano to wonder if her anger is what teachers feel when researchers, administrators, and appointed teacher leaders announce their presence and authority through the language of teaching, yet are not teachers in their very being. Surrounded by policymakers, legislators, and

administrators who make decisions for teachers, teachers become sensitive to those who present themselves as teachers but who are not. They are on guard against those who “seem” like teachers.

We announce ourselves to each other every day. We can do so more or less authentically. It is possible, Heidegger (1962/2008) explains, “for an entity to show itself as something which in itself it is *not*. When it shows itself in this way, it ‘looks like something or other’” (p. 51), and is, in actuality, not what it seems. One example is van Manen’s (2002) exploration of how a teacher’s true self can be seen through the seeming: the glance. His phenomenological description is worth quoting at length:

We may say the “right” words, but our glance betrays our true feelings. Through a glance we are immediately known to each other. A sobering realization. A glance cannot be manipulated in the same way as words can be shaped to suit our purposes. . . . Imagine that we have just observed a rowdy classroom. Here is a classic example of a beginning teacher who does not know how to effect “discipline” in a classroom, helplessly facing taunting students, defiant looks in their eyes. Now observe another teacher. One admonishing glance in response to a smart remark from a student is enough for this teacher to settle the same class down to work. . . . Could one *learn* how to handle the class with a glance? Could one write a “how to” book to help others learn? Not likely. . . . An effective teacher can be effective with a glance because the teacher *is* the glance. The glance is already the teachers’ way of living and understanding the classroom situation. (pp. 49-50)

Just as students can see the teacher in the glance (or see through a false glance to the person who seems to be a teacher), teachers notice each other’s glances. They examine the person claiming to be a teacher—eyes, tone, energy—against the words and claims a person makes in the name of teaching.

I scan for “seeming” whenever I attend conferences and briefings. Representatives from educational associations begin speeches by saying, “I used to teach [insert subject] for [insert number of years], so while I do not endure the

pressures teachers now feel, I can remember what it was like to. . .” Within ten seconds I know if it is true. When it is not, I, like Pagano, become angry. Perhaps this is why I nervously refused to call myself a teacher leader in a room of other practicing educators. True teachers (true teacher leaders?) do not need to claim to be one. They *are*. And they know other true teachers can sense it.

The True Teacher

Max van Manen (2002) offers the insight that the teacher does not use a glance; the teacher *is* the glance. The teacher *is* pedagogy:

[B]eginning teachers tend to be amateurish in their thinking and acting. When confronted with a significant moment, they tend to think first, “What does the book say?” And when they then act, the significant moment is often gone. A professional, in contrast, takes the moment first, and then thinks about it. A professional can act first because his or her body has been readied by thoughtfulness. Or to say it differently, educators can act pedagogically at significant moments because they are already animated by the spirit of pedagogy formed by past reflections. (pp. 55-56)

New teachers learn to carry the spirit of pedagogy with them as they accumulate more and more past reflection. They become attuned to this spirit, sensing the movement of pedagogy more and more, feeling the pressure of textbooks less and less. They sense the students and the pedagogy that bind them all together. Teachers gain more and more thoughtful experience with significant moments. Reflection eventually finds objects of contemplation outside the classroom walls, because “a teacher who is a ‘true’ educator always intends to offer his or her actions as a solution to the question of what education is, or what it means to be inspired and guided by pedagogy” (p. 55). These questions are larger than the walls of one classroom can contain, just as the spirit of pedagogy transcends any one teacher.

The teacher must learn to notice those questions, however. The true teacher

sees through “teacher eyes” (van Manen, 2002, p. 56) that make it possible to read books, situations, and even fellow teachers in ways that inspire more nuanced understandings of pedagogy. This evolution from new-teacher into true-teacher-
animated-by-pedagogy comes about because, “Tactful educators have developed a caring attentiveness to the unique: the uniqueness of children, the uniqueness of every situation, and the uniqueness of individual lives” (p. 8). I would add that teachers develop a caring attentiveness to the uniqueness of fellow teachers as well. This care-beyond-their-own-classroom is born out of pedagogy: “The world becomes [their] classroom, and the potential to teach and learn is found everywhere. [Teachers] need only be in the world as [their] true selves, with open hearts and minds” (Palmer, 1998, p. 183). The more a teacher someone becomes, the more their “teacher eyes” can take in, and the more room their hearts and minds have for other students and teachers.

Responsibility

Openness allows teachers to hear other teachers when they call out with their own pedagogical dilemmas. Sometimes the call is announced out loud in publications, union meetings, a workshop, or in the lunch room; other times teachers announce their queries through a glance towards a student as he leaves the classroom or a thoughtful pause that interrupts the pen’s movement across an essay that needs grading. A beginning teacher might not notice, or might see it but not be captivated. A true teacher, one who has grown into the sense that the world is a classroom, will feel compelled to notice. With the tact and thoughtfulness that defines pedagogy, the teacher will wonder, What response is the right response in this moment with this colleague? The teacher is in another teacher’s thrall.

Teachers feel responsible for each other, and teachers who have grown into this responsibility develop their “response-ability” (van Manen, 2014, p. 115). “Responsibility” comes from the Latin *respondere*, which signals a promise made in return, a response (Harper, 2018). It is a pledge, but, as Levinas reminds us, it is not a pledge that we consciously make with our minds or even with morality we have adopted. The claim that an Other makes upon us takes us hostage. Each of us must say, “I am ordered toward the face of the other” (Levinas, 1981/2011, p. 11). Before we take responsibility, we *are* responsible. This call addresses us in our very being, “by [our] most intimate name” (Hellemans, 1984, p. 129). When one teacher feels responsible for another there is no ignoring it. In the following passage, van Manen (2014) describes the responsibility a teacher feels for a child; however, it can also be read as the pull between two teachers when one is in need:

[The] ethical experience of caring responsibility . . . singles me out. It addresses each person uniquely. When the voice calls, then it is no use to look around to see if it was meant for someone else. No, here is this [teacher] in front of me, and I look this [teacher] in the face. Before I can even think about it, I already have experienced my responsiveness. I ‘know’ this [teacher] calls upon me. (p. 321)

Being-with among teachers that has its genesis in this deeply personal call is necessarily intimate. One face stares into another. There is no hiding one’s true nature. Teachers leave their shelters. They are exposed.

A true teacher, or so-called “teacher leader,” is sensed by and senses other teachers. Without this common understanding between and among teachers, the kind of being-with we call teacher leadership cannot be. Engineered forms of teacher leadership—bestowing formal titles and corralling teachers into teacher-led work sessions—cannot manufacture an authentic call from one teacher’s being to another.

It cannot create the timeless stillness that teachers need to be able to see and listen to one another. It also cannot attend to the kinds of questions that teachers encounter when they face the faces of their colleagues.

The ways teachers summon each other raise complex dilemmas that teachers must confront. They must decide. Some of these questions are raised by van Manen (2014). For instance, how does a teacher respond if another asks for something that cannot—or should not—be provided? What should a “teacher leader” do when more than one teacher makes a claim, but they cannot all receive attention? If responding to others means that the teacher must forsake attention to his or her own self, which responsibility is most important? What happens when answering a call of teachers by leaving the classroom means that individual students (with faces) will no longer lay claim to the teacher? Van Manen points out that we “can only be receptive to the appeal of the other” (p. 117) when we take care of ourselves; and we know deep down we can only attend to one responsibility at a time. However, when a teacher feels called by unique responsibilities to individual students, faceless students, individual teachers, groups of faceless teachers, and maybe even children at home, what is a teacher to do then? How do teachers experience these competing claims? As a sense of irresponsibility? Possibility? And how do they hear their own being through all the noise?

Re-naming “Teacher Leadership” Through Hermeneutic Phenomenology

Tuan (1977) and I share a concern: “We are in the habit of denying or forgetting the real nature of our experiences in favor of the clichés of public speech” (p. 203). The language of teacher leadership asks teachers to care about outcomes,

performance, student data, and effectiveness (things that mechanize and depersonalize); simultaneously, and confusingly, that language invokes professionalism and teacher expertise. Yet, teachers with pedagogical expertise know that teaching, at its core, is an endeavor of intimacy, hope, and possibility enacted with their colleagues and students, among others. Teachers need language that resonates with their lived experience of being-with, and “the discourse of [researchers, administrators, policymakers, and legislators] must be enlarged to include questions” that take experience into account (p. 202). Remembering questions of experience is not easy. As Tuan notes, they are questions that we have all found convenient to forget.

In Chapter Three I explore hermeneutic phenomenology as a methodology that can reawaken us to teachers’ experiences of teacher leadership. Teachers sense their surroundings and colleagues with more than cognition. Pedagogy is a way of being, not a set of instructional strategies correctly deployed. “Teacher leadership” is an intimate form of being-with in spaces opened by true teachers, not a title or a discrete phase in a continuum. If we wish to listen to teachers give a true name to what we now call leadership, and, “[i]f we wish to study and enhance the pathic dimensions of teaching and educational life, [then] we need a language that can express and communicate these understandings. This language needs to remain oriented to the experiential or lived sensibility of everyday life” (van Manen, 2002, p. 54). Hermeneutic phenomenology, and the ontology from which it emerges, can attend closely to teachers as beings, to their experiences, and to the language that will open the phenomenon of teacher leadership to new possibilities.

CHAPTER THREE: TOWARDS THE TEACHERS THEMSELVES—IN PHILOSOPHY AND METHODOLOGY

When we raise questions, gather data, describe a phenomenon, and construct textual interpretations, we do so as researchers who stand in the world in a pedagogic way. (van Manen, 1997, p. 1)

What is the lived experience of teacher leadership as a way of being-with among teachers? Before essential structures of what it means to be a teacher leader can come forward in the following chapters, the phenomenological question itself—its rationale and nature—requires attention. This singular question demands methodological rigor; stems from a tradition of phenomenological philosophy and scholarship; keeps research open to possibilities that emerge in conversation and analysis; respects the meaning-making power of the teachers in the study; and is, at its core, a question with a pedagogic orientation. Phenomenological descriptions and hermeneutic interpretations invite reflective action in which we act as and with teachers in a more careful and care-full way, attuned to their growth as human beings who dwell in language and possibility.

Chapter One, the phenomenological turn, explores my own horizon of experience with teacher leadership and how I found myself compelled to understand its significance. Chapter Two is an existential exploration of the phenomenon. In Chapter Three I draw upon Heidegger, Gadamer, Freire, and van Manen as their texts “merge with [my] own questioning” of teacher leadership (Gadamer, 1975/2004, p. 367). I re-turn to the question of what it means to be a teacher leader; describe the phenomenological approach to human science research; engage in pedagogic reflection about the meaning of this approach vis-à-vis teacher leadership; and

describe the process of engagement for the study designed as a “systematic attempt to uncover and describe the structures, the internal meaning structures, of [the] lived experience” of teacher leadership (van Manen, 1997, p. 10).

The ontology that grounds this tradition of scholarship naturally guides the methodological choices in the study. First and foremost, ontology gives rise to the phenomenological research question, a question of what it means *to be*—a question that carries with it a fundamentally human orientation towards what something is like and what it means to understand what that something is like for others. Teachers’ situations, contexts, and experiences, when seen through this ontological lens, compel me to ask the phenomenological question of teacher leadership.

The Nature of the Question

From a phenomenological point of view we keep reminding ourselves that the question of knowledge always refers us back to our world, to our lives, to who we are, and to what makes us write, read, and talk together as educators; it is what stands iconically behind the words, the speaking and the language. (van Manen, 1997, p. 46)

While many explorations of teacher leadership focus on *it* (e.g., what teacher leadership entails, how to tell when it is successful, how teachers perceive it, who wants to do it, how to support it, the student outcomes it produces), few focus on what it is like *for them*, the teachers who experience the leadership. During one qualitative study exploring the nature of teacher leadership, the participants told the researchers, “‘You don’t get it.’ The participants taught the research team that it was hard to describe the many things that these successful leaders did every day despite [the researchers’] well-thought-out interviews and observations of them at work” (Lieberman & Friedrich, 2010a, pp. 652-653). The teachers sensed that the crux of

teacher leadership was eluding the study, and the researchers encountered the limits of their own questions and methods. Researchers and teachers both experienced the boundary lines of what current teacher leadership language permits us to understand.

Which questions will allow us to push past those boundary lines, to go above, behind, around them? It is dangerous to ask questions without stopping to question the questions themselves. Understanding what lies behind a line of questioning within any tradition of scholarship is essential for moving forward. To find the right question, the one that will “open up possibilities and keep them open” (p. 299), we must recognize that we know less than we think we do about teacher experience.

It would be natural to gravitate towards more widely used forms of questioning to learn about teacher experience. This observation by van Manen (1997) advises caution, however: It is not uncommon for “scientific knowledge as well as everyday knowledge [to believe] that it has already had much to say about a phenomenon, such as what the phenomenon of parenting is, or what parents do or should do, before it has actually come to an understanding of what it means to be a parent in the first place” (p. 47). We ask a lot of *what* and *how* questions; fewer *why* questions that explore the deeper purposes for teacher leadership; and still fewer questions about what teacher leadership *means* to the teacher—not what it means in terms of its definition, but the kind of meaning that has to do with “what people find *meaningful* in their lives” (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980/2003, p. ix). We jump ahead of ourselves. Our questions are out of order. The quest for facts can, and often does, crowd out questions about the significance that a human endeavor, such as teaching or leading, holds for us. Freire (1970/2010) describes the consequences of rushing

past the people in the name of questions aimed, in the case of teacher leadership, at efficient and timely program design in education:

We must never merely discourse on the present situation, must never provide the people with programs which have little or nothing to do with their own preoccupations, doubts, hopes, and fears—programs which at times in fact increase [their] fears . . . We must realize that their view of the world, manifested variously in their action, reflects their *situation* in the world. Educational and political action which is not critically aware of this situation runs the risk either of “banking” [i.e., depositing information into teachers as if they were objectified receptacles] or of preaching in the desert. (p. 96)

While a commitment to understanding teachers’ situated experiences of teacher leadership is important for the success of teacher leadership initiatives, of fundamental human importance is the imperative to create programs that take good care of teachers and allow them to take good care of each other.

Questions of Experience

What does it mean to ask questions about teacher experience? Are the “right” experience questions ones that bring forward how teacher leaders behave, the factors that hinder or enable their work, and the conditions to which they respond well? What determines the rightness of a question? According to Langan (1984), we generate questions in response to a need born out of complex interactions:

What appears (*phanasthai*) in the situation are challenges to the individual, *needs both interior* to the individual himself, *and exterior*—the needs of the other person, of the institutions within which we work and by which we are formed, and the needs of things. The ability to respond to these needs depends, objectively, on adequate appreciation of them, and, subjectively, on an overcoming of characterological and psychopathological barriers to our facing them [emphasis added]. (p. 104)

Teachers in teacher leader roles find themselves, according to this description, needing to be asked about, and we—as fellow teachers, as researchers, policymakers—find ourselves needing to understand them.

This jointly felt need is a bond experienced as a question. As such the question should neither come from only the internal reflections of one teacher leader, nor should it be justified solely on the basis of a trail of inquiry in scholarship. The need to be understood is relational and human:

The tree does not need phenomenological description. . . .I may need to appreciate the tree in many respects, to satisfy many aspects of my human nature, but it would be merely romantic to suggest that the tree itself needs appreciating. . . . But there exists in man a need to uncover deeper questions, implying broader contexts, having to do more with the destiny of [humankind] as such and ultimately with the happening of Being itself. This need is rooted, according to Aristotle, in the nature of intelligence itself, which by its form is meant to know all Being. (Langan, 1984, pp. 104-105)

Humans are driven by the dual need to understand and to be understood. Teaching is a human institution devoted to helping children learn and become. Teacher leaders help their colleagues learn and become while they themselves evolve. Constituted by interactions that inspire deeper questions about what it means *to be* pedagogically, teacher leadership requires questions of experience that maintain relation to broader contexts and to the meaning of being a teacher to students, to other teachers, and to oneself. Only then should questions about how to make a program work, or the supports that enable teacher retention, make sense.

Practical, causal questions are, of course, essential for the pursuit of effective practices in education. It would be misguided to suggest that “experimental,” causal, or correlational investigations are not useful, or to suggest that those investigations are never related to experience. The danger, however, is in allowing questions about *what works* to overtake or be mistaken for questions of being, of *what it means* to be this or that in life. It is also dangerous to assume that questions of what something means cannot or should not inform decisions about what to do next. The danger is

this: “The pursuit of such local [“factual”] aims becomes an all-absorbing block to the pursuit of ultimate truth, which is itself a genuine ontic (and not just ontological) need” (Langan, 1984, p. 105). Making sense of life is more than philosophical luxury; it is something people do because of the interplay of day-to-day pressures or curiosities and the need to have meaningful direction in life. Barbour (2000) observes, “We do not experience life as neatly divided into separate compartments; we experience it in wholeness and interconnectedness before we develop particular disciplines to study different aspects of it” (p. 22). What Barbour calls “constructive dialogue and mutual enrichment” among disciplines and questions brings our world into view. There are many types of questions worth asking.

Questions of Predictability and Generalizability

If we allow the pursuit of causal aims to block questions of experiential meaning, then we operate within teacher leadership—and on teachers—on the basis of assumptions. The consequences are misinterpretation, concealment of truth, and obscurity of possibilities for teachers and education. Dangerously, even the very presence of consequences can be hidden from our gaze. Misinterpretation occurs when what is seen is mistaken for more than it is. Rather than question what it means for something *to seem* a certain way, it becomes easy to believe that what we see and measure *is*. In Heidegger’s (1977/2008e) words, “The unconcealment in which everything that is shows itself at any given time harbors the danger that man may misconstrue the unconcealed and misinterpret it” (p. 331). This misinterpretation, in turn, conceals aspects of being that do not fit into what we think we understand (i.e.,

what we have seen) about teaching and have neatly ordered into categories and sequences.

Even if the order we discover or impose allows us to make correct predictions, we deceive ourselves if we think we understand. For example, we might be able to see the part of nature that “presents itself as a calculable complex of the effects of forces,” and those observations “can indeed permit correct determinations; but precisely through these successes the danger may remain that in the midst of all that is correct the true will withdraw” (Heidegger, 1977/2008e, p. 331). For example, we might learn that teacher leadership roles that allow teachers to remain connected to the classroom are linked to higher teacher retention rates, and we might think we have therefore learned something about what matters to teachers. In seeing that which presents itself “in the light of a cause-effect coherence” other possibilities are lost: “Where this ordering holds sway, it drives out every other possibility of revealing” (p. 332). Distortion of this kind, wherein we think we know enough to control nature or persons, is especially dangerous because “on the basis of their integrated structure in a system, [structures, concepts, and persons] present themselves as something ‘clear’ which is in no need of further justification and which therefore can serve as a point of departure or a process of deduction” (Heidegger, 1977/2008a, pp. 82-83). Seeking comfort in consistency can facilitate success in science and in daily life; however, it “most likely hide[s] indefinitely many aspects of reality” (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980/2003, p. 221).

There are consequences when questions of meaning remain invisible. Ahmed (2010) shares this abiding concern: “A failure of consciousness, a false consciousness

about the world, is what blocks other possible worlds, as a blockage that makes possibles impossible, such that possibles are lost before they can be lived, experienced, or imagined” (p. 165). More than losing possible questions, the teachers who live teacher leadership lose the possibilities of existence that might have opened with the unasked, invisible questions. If teacher leadership is designed with answers to causal and correlational questions alone, the person who does the teaching and leading recedes into the background. Asking questions in order to design programs for *a kind of person*, like “teacher leader” presupposes that teachers are objects *that* proceed through a theory of action that lives apart from the teachers, regardless of their individual, unique presence. Humans are not objects. As subjects *who* create meaningful paths for themselves in connection with others, teacher leaders require questions of meaning.

Embracing the Question of Experiential Meaning

Questions of causality, experimentation, and categorization are important, but must operate in conjunction with questions of meaning. The teacher leaders themselves require questions that help them make more sense of their daily decisions in relationship to the larger significance of their body of work. We need, therefore, to ask, *What is teacher leadership like for a teacher?* or to put it another way, *What does it mean for a teacher to be a teacher leader?* This question of experiential meaning comes face-to-face with the experience of teacher leadership while realizing that there is always more than meets the eye. It is the question that answers Gadamer’s (1975/2004) exacting call to “open up possibilities and keep them open” (p. 299). This question is ontological; it is rooted in how teachers experience leadership—in

what it means to be a teacher leader. Therefore, I now turn toward the ontology of teacher leadership, to be followed by phenomenological methodology and the particular methods of this study.

Ontology of Beings-as-Teacher-Leaders

[T]here is some way in which Dasein understands itself in its Being, and that to some degree it does so explicitly. It is peculiar to this entity that with and through its Being, this Being is disclosed to it. *Understanding of Being is itself a definite characteristic of Dasein's Being.* Dasein is ontically distinctive in that it *is* ontological. (Heidegger, 1962/2008, p. 32)

Humans are deeply aware that they *are*. Heidegger calls beings with awareness of meaningful existence *Dasein*. We are *Dasein*. When Heidegger uses the term *Dasein*, he refers neither to the whatness of the person (human as opposed to table or cat) nor to a disembodied consciousness (the “cogito” in “Cogito ergo sum”), but rather to its Being, its relational existence in the world. *Dasein's* being is Being. For Heidegger, questions of Being are not something that we, as *Dasein*, ask idly to pass the time; questions of Being are what it means *to be Dasein*. *Dasein*, as existence aware of and interested in Being, requires ontological questions.

All methodologies can trace their roots back to ontological claims, but Heideggarian hermeneutic phenomenology cannot be understood or enacted apart from the ontology that gives rise to it. Questions of lived experience cannot be asked or discussed at any kind of distance from what it means to be in the world with other beings. The aim of hermeneutic phenomenology is ontological: to allow Selves to encounter themselves and Others in Being, because to exist is *to be* in the world with other beings. Others, in Heideggarian language, are not separate from me because they are different; they are Others with me as fellow *Dasein*. Discussions about

phenomenological methodology must, therefore, begin with ontology and what it means “to be.” Likewise, an ontological justification is required for the claim that, as *Dasein*, we must seek understandings of what it is *to be* in the world as a teacher leader.

Being as Care

Existence is not solitary. In Heidegger’s (1962/2008) words, “The world is always the one that I share with Others. The world of *Dasein* is a *with-world*” (p. 155). At different times we might be more or less concerned with certain people, objects, or animals. However, feeling unaware or disconnected does not disprove the premise that existence is relational; aversion and indifference are simply varieties of concern, awareness, or with-ness. Being-with is the mode of existence that belongs to *Dasein*, and in reaching that conclusion, Heidegger realizes that “*Dasein*’s Being has revealed itself as care” (p. 227).

Dasein cares in many forms. Things, in particular those things that we perceive as being useful, *concern* us. They matter insofar as they allow us to do something for a particular purpose. Heidegger explains that others who share being as *Dasein* cannot—ontologically—concern us in the same way a tool might. Tools do not exist in relational awareness of Being; *Dasein* does. While the demands of the everyday and man-made systems often distort people into useful objects, the space of quiet moments allows us to remember what Heidegger posited: *Dasein* relates to fellow beings-in-Being with a different care than the care we extend toward things. In its most authentic form, care for others, or *solicitude*, is directed towards “the existence of the Other, not to a ‘*what*’ with which he is concerned” (p. 159). This

form of care at once allows the care-giver to be more fully a being-with-others, and it helps the cared-for “to become transparent to himself *in* his care and to become *free for it*” (p. 159). Since the nature of our being is such that we are with Others, to care is to see Others as *Dasein* and to attune ourselves to the relationships that make up our own existence.

Teachers understand care for Others at the core of their being. The connection that teachers forge with their students is because teachers care. We take that care for granted and are appalled if a teacher breeches this trust. When a principal or parent says that students are in a teacher’s care, he or she means that the teacher ensures safety and rule compliance. They also mean that a teacher who cares nurtures students. We know students want teachers who care about them. As the adage among educators goes, “Students won’t care what you know until they know you care.”

What does it mean for a teacher to care about students if care comes from the core of who teachers and students are as *Dasein*, and if care is given and received among beings who are in the world together? Care is more than warmth offered in support or entering the space in which one is “under the teacher’s care.”

Etymologically the word care comes from the Old English *carian* which means “to be anxious or grieve” (Harper, 2018). The teacher who cares, then, is one who is deeply attuned to student needs and growth (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 2016). When the student moves forward and faces uncertainty, the teacher is anxious for the student. It is out of this concern, perhaps, that teachers seek to prepare their students for the future. Perhaps to care as a teacher is to be connected as one being-in-uncertainty to another.

We often say, “I feel for you,” to express sympathy or solidarity with someone’s anxiety or grief. The care that the teacher offers the student, however, is not an offer to feel *for* him, in place of him. To care authentically is to help the Other feel for himself. Paradoxically, caring is both selfish and selfless. It is a self-centered act wherein the caregiver must be aware of his being-as- *Dasein* connected to others, and it is an encounter that seeks the Other’s fulfillment. In Heidegger’s (1977/2008g) words, “to teach is to let learn” (p. 380). In caring, the teacher knows that teaching is about what the student needs; the teacher *is*, in that moment and relationship, for the student. On the other hand, she can only *be for* the student if she lets herself learn as well. To teach is to let the student and the teacher-self learn. To care as a teacher “is to serve” (van Manen, 1997, p. 5) by creating open spaces wherein possibilities can dwell and be perceived by teacher and students alike.

What does it mean for a teacher to care for other teachers? How does a teacher experience caring for fellow teachers, and how does a teacher-as-teacher leader tend to the teachers that the school system has placed under his care? Do teacher leaders care for their own or others’ students and fellow teachers in similar ways? Is the caretaking of these adults in service to caretaking of children? What does it mean for the teacher-as-caretaker (and for the teachers and students who receive the care) to take care of both teachers and students at the same time? Teachers must find a way towards understanding what it means to care when teacher-caring evolves into caring deeply for more and more adults in expanding work-worlds. A path towards understanding is necessary for teachers to become centered in themselves, to realize their own possibilities, and to care for themselves and others as beings-who-dwell-in-

Being. Furthermore, those who work with teachers must walk this path attuned to themselves as beings-with-teachers who shape teachers' possibilities and whose possibilities are, in turn, shaped by the possibilities teachers seek.

Being as Possibility

Dasein, as Being with Others, is because *Dasein* cares. Caring is, as Heidegger explains, the structure of *Dasein*'s relational awareness of Being and of being with others. It is because *Dasein* cares about Being that it concerns itself with its own being and is always looking ahead: "Dasein always has understood itself and always will understand itself in terms of possibilities" (Heidegger, 1962/2008, p. 184). Looking ahead for those possibilities, we are beings who constantly develop (Levin, 1985) and for whom "there is *constantly something still to be settled*" (Heidegger, 1962/2008, p. 279). If a pedagogic orientation towards students is a form of care, then pedagogy itself is rooted in possibility. The yet-to-be is what teachers sense for themselves and care to protect and encourage in their students. The yet-to-be is perhaps what teachers-as-teacher-leaders feel for their colleagues and schools.

Freire agrees that *being* is the process of *becoming*, and also believes that *becoming* is the center of education. Respect for this fundamental and dynamic aspect of our nature gives rise to Freire's (1970/2010) critique of the "banking model" of education that deposits information into people as if they were empty vessels. It also gives rise to his promotion of problem-posing education as a means of fostering critical literacy and engendering the liberation of oppressed peoples. Freire (1970/2010) explains:

In this incompleteness and this awareness lie the very roots of education as an exclusively human manifestation. The unfinished character of human beings

and the transformational character of reality necessitate that education be an ongoing activity . . . [that] affirms women and men as beings who transcend themselves, who move forward and look ahead. (p. 84)

Education must be an ongoing activity for students as well as for the teachers, administrators, and other educators who tend to schools. As human institutions, schools must nurture the people within their walls. Teachers, administrators, policy makers, and researchers must care about the possibilities that teachers can envision. Nurturing people is more than tending to them in the here and now. Seeing teachers as beings-in-becoming is necessary if schools are to be transformative for adults and children alike.

What does ongoing education for educators entail? There is professional development and learning: the in-services, the continuing education credits, the graduate degrees, and the professional learning communities. But how do beings-as-teachers seek fulfillment? What notifies them to the presence of a need? What are teachers called by when they accept the possibility of career growth through teacher leadership? Is it teacher leadership, or is that concept the proxy offered by school systems for whatever possibility, if realized, that would truly quench the need the teacher has? Teacher leadership as a possibility would, in that case, mislead; it would *seem* to offer much, but once achieved, it could evaporate leaving the same unfulfilled need. In grasping what is available proximally, does the teacher inadvertently obscure that which she truly seeks, that which withdraws just beyond tangible teacher leadership roles?

Possibility, by definition, is something that can happen, but possibilities do not always come to fruition. The receding possibility can exist as a fanciful wish, or it

can withdraw but remain probable. Possibilities can be inauthentic if the choice to pursue them was made by someone other than the person who lives those possibilities. Possibilities can be authentic and fulfilling if they are in sync with the person's needs and turn into actuality. How do teachers sense and experience incompleteness though? Is the incompleteness that spurs a search for new possibility the same as the incompleteness that teachers sense when the possibility is on the horizon, but they cannot yet understand or search for it? Is it a still different incompleteness when a teacher is frustrated by that which remains unfulfilled?

It is possible, and highly likely, that possibility is not experienced as the binaries just discussed—completion or incompleteness; fulfillment or unfulfillment; realistic or unrealistic. Those terms can only be assigned in hindsight, once it is known if the possible turned into the probable or not. We lay those categories onto the possibilities of our past in an attempt to get a grip on the possibilities we have yet to encounter. When we are *in* possibility, we do not know the kind it will turn out to be. The meaning of possibility resides in its very nature as that-which-might-be. Possibility is, by definition, always just beyond reach. It withdraws. Heidegger (1977/2008g) writes, “What withdraws may even concern and claim man more essentially than anything present that strikes and touches him” (p. 374). In possibilities of teacher leadership, teachers have much at stake. If teacher leaders' being is care—for themselves, their students, and their colleagues—then the withdrawing nature of possibility presses upon teacher leaders. They carry with them not only their own possibilities, but also the possibilities that belong to fellow

teachers and their students. They carry the promises, threats, uncertainties, hopes, and excitements that possibilities inspire in each person under their care.

Alongside such pressure exists the potential for freedom. Education as possibility requires that teachers and students alike are free to choose possibilities that resonate with their being. Can possibilities within teacher leadership draw beings-as-teachers more fully into themselves? Which parts of the teacher-self are called by various teacher leadership possibilities, and what forms of teacher leadership (as care between teachers) might allow teachers in their whole Being to come forward?

Being in Language

Language is the house of Being. In its home man dwells. Those who think and those who create with words are the guardians of this home. (Heidegger, 1977/2008b, p. 217)

Dasein, as a being with Others, exists in possibility and care. *Dasein* seeks possibilities for its own fulfillment and sees Others as beings who are also becoming. We relate to each other and the world, and language allows possibility and care to announce themselves: “Language is the happening in which beings first disclose themselves to man each time as beings” (Heidegger, 1977/2008d, p. 199). It is through language that we present ourselves to ourselves and to each other. It is important to clarify that language is not separate from us, a tool for our use that we put down and pick up; rather, we are *of* language and “speak *from out of* it” (Heidegger, 1977/2008f, p. 411) because “Being that can be understood is language” (Gadamer, 1975/2004, p. 470). Ontologically speaking, language is part of the essential structure of what it means for us to become ourselves. In it resides possibility. Gadamer (1975/2004) writes that “whoever has language ‘has’ the world”

(p. 449) because “a language-view is a worldview” (p. 440). These statements are ontological. Through language we are beings in the world, come to know the world, and exist with the world. Language transforms worlds (Freire, 1970/2010) and allows *Dasein* to see itself as Being. Language can liberate.

Language can also distort, impose, and even oppress. In the world of the everyday, “people in power get to impose their metaphors” (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980/2003, p. 157). At the bottom of a heavy bureaucracy, teachers are more often consumers than creators of the language of education policy. Teacher leadership is traded in such terms as coach, leader, chair, change agent. Yet all of these terms are borrowed from other worlds and patched on to teacher leadership. As metaphors those words affect perceptions, inferences, and actions (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980/2003), i.e., teachers and administrators envision the possibilities of teacher leadership to reside in its coach-ness or chair-ness. What if teaching requires teachers to imagine different possibilities? If language as controlled by others can affect and even restrict teachers’ motion and possibilities, then “by naming their own experiences and writing . . . in a language of their own” (Bloom, 1998), teachers can release themselves back into possibilities of their own making. I wonder if reclaiming language through the dense fog of everyday educational jargon will come easily for teachers, steeped as they are in the language that others have written for them. Steeped even more so in the language of Being, however, *Dasein* announces itself

thereby making it possible for beings-as-teachers to anticipate the language that lies just out of reach.

Displacing Being in the “They”

Beings can, in care or solicitude, support each other in seeing and seeking possibilities that make them more of who they are. However, the opposite is also true: “Man can . . . also *not* let beings be the beings which they are and as they are. Then beings are covered up and distorted. Semblance comes to power. In it the nonessence of truth comes to the fore” (Heidegger, 1977/2008c, p. 127). One being can certainly choose whether or not to see another being as that which he or she is; however, the ‘everyday’ can create conditions in which beings as a whole are obscured from each other. The hum and busy-ness of the everyday world covers over the relatedness of our existence; possibilities are concealed and few people have power over the language at their disposal. Heidegger (1962/2008) calls this “Self of everydayness” the “they” (p. 296). What do beings-as-teachers experience when they encounter what the “they” want teachers to be as teacher leaders?

“They” defined. For over one hundred years “they say” has colloquially connoted mysterious and unnamed authority (Harper, 2018). Heidegger would say, not dissimilarly, that “they” is the everyday mode of being of *Dasein* in which *Dasein* exists as the version or portion of its Self that “they” decide should be visible. Being becomes distant or absent to *Dasein*, but what “they” want is immediately present. “They” are not people; “they” is a mode of existence in which relation is made so

distant and so little perceived that in our inability to see the agency in Others we fail to recognize it in ourselves.

This they-world is constituted by “averageness” (Heidegger, 1962/2008, p. 164) and by the way things have been “publicly interpreted” for *Dasein* (p. 296); it “expresses itself in idle talk” (p. 296) that says much but means little. “They” make decisions for *Dasein*, and yet it is impossible to tell who did the actual choosing. It determines “that which it regards as valid and that which it does not” and “that to which it grants success and that to which it denies it” (p. 165). Because of the close proximity of the everyday of the “they” to *Dasein*, “one’s way of Being is that of inauthenticity and failure to stand by one’s Self” (p. 166). *Dasein* is lost in others—others who are no longer fellow Selves in Being, but who now appear different, distant, and unlike us. The “They” otherizes the Others.

Life in the everyday allows “them” to dissolve a felt sense of Being. With it the authentic care that is *Dasein*’s existence erodes:

With *Dasein*’s lostness in the “they,” that factual potentiality-for-Being which is closest to it (the tasks, rules, and standards, the urgency and extent, of concerned and solicitous Being-in-the-world) has already been decided upon. The “they” has always kept *Dasein* from taking hold of these possibilities of Being. The “they” even hides the manner in which it has tacitly relieved *Dasein* of the burden of explicitly *choosing* these possibilities. It remains indefinite who has ‘really’ done the choosing. So *Dasein* makes no choices, gets carried along by the nobody, and thus ensnares itself in inauthenticity. (Heidegger, 1962/2008, p. 312)

Dasein’s sense of becoming and possibility is dulled. Teachers are faced with extraordinary demands on their time, mental energy, psychological well being, and physical capacity. In the staff lunchroom and workroom, teachers will say of the nameless and faceless authors of new mandates that “they” do not know what

teachers in classrooms really need. The bell schedule, the textbooks, the regulations announce the presence of decisions made by others. That curriculum exists, that school systems are bureaucracies, that teachers are responsible for certain practices but not others, that teachers share certain aspects of their practice but not others, that teachers and administrators see each other as ‘us’ and ‘them’—these characteristics of schools were created by no one in particular and yet are lived by everyone.

As teacher leaders seek opportunities to make more or different decisions than they were allowed to make previously, they must rely upon their ability to notice decisions that are waiting to be made. If “they” hide most decisions-as-opportunities from sight, then much of teacher leadership as we know it is what “they” allow us to know. If that is the case, then we have not yet encountered teacher leadership beyond what “they” say it is; we have not yet encountered what it holds for people who teach with all of their being. From the standpoint of teacher leadership policy and enactment we might now wonder, What decisions are invisible to teacher leaders? Which possibilities hide from sight? Which preliminary understandings about teacher leadership are authentic to what it means *to be* as a teacher, and which have instead come to be in the disconnected everyday that “they” manage? And if the world of “they” is the day-to-day systems of education teacher leaders hope to influence, how can teachers be apart from it enough to notice the invisible, and simultaneously be in it enough to act upon it?

Covering possibilities. ‘Authentic’ is used in education as a term that denotes greater proximity to whatever someone knows or does naturally, as opposed to what they know or do in simulated environments. Authentic assessments, for example, are

performance-based and allow students to show what they know as they use that knowledge in some kind of “real-world” way. Authentic stems from the Greek *authentikos* meaning “one acting on one’s own authority” (Harper, 2018), and so authenticity goes beyond the quality of being the real thing or of being a close approximation of an original. In a phenomenological sense, authenticity as we live it is to act for oneself in keeping with oneself. *Dasein* in an authentic mode of existence experiences “the self’s assumption of full responsibility for itself through its ability to respond to the deepest needs and possibilities of the situation” (Langan, 1984, p. 109). Authenticity is agency rooted in care, and care is the being of *Dasein*.

But in the everyday, *Dasein* loses sight of its authentic Self because the “they” hides *Dasein*’s possibilities. *Dasein*’s own Self is covered:

The Self of everyday *Dasein* is the *they-self*, which we distinguish from the *authentic Self*—that is, from the Self which has been taken hold of in its own way. As they-self, the particular *Dasein* has been *dispersed* into the “they,” and must first find itself. . . . In terms of the “they,” and as the “they,” I am ‘given’ proximally to ‘myself.’ (Heidegger, 1962/2008, p. 167)

Dasein becomes obscured from others and from its own Self. Furthermore, the way we come to know ourselves is filtered through “them.” “They” interpret us for us: “*Dasein* grows into a customary interpretation of itself and grows up in that interpretation. It understands itself in terms of this interpretation at first, and within a certain range, constantly. This understanding discloses the possibilities of its Being and regulates them” (Heidegger, 1977/2008a, p. 63). Each person sees the versions of him or herself that the realm of everyday possibilities presents.

Teachers are no exception. Teaching presents options to them. Seeking a change or opportunity for career growth, teachers can choose from a range of options:

professional association leadership, legislative advocacy, hybrid roles, department chair, teach new classes or grade levels, move to a new school, administration, professional development, earn additional degrees, employment in the private sector, etc. While the options are varied and grow more varied each year, they are preset and permeate the world of teaching. Teachers assume their existence as part of the classroom's backdrop and then seek those options out when the need for new opportunities announces itself.

The “they” constrains how teachers visualize themselves as leaders, and similarly shapes how teachers see others and the trends and forces that make up their profession. McDermott and Varenne (1995) observe that the unseen forces of culture as enacted by people, which have much in common with Heidegger's analysis of the they-world, “help to define the situation-specific, emotionally demanding, and sensuous problems that we must confront. . . . We might just as well say that culture fashions problems for us and, from the same sources, expects us to construct solutions” (p. 338). In the context of teacher leadership, we could say that “they” create a teaching career that instills certain kinds of itchiness in teachers for new spheres of influence. Then the same system that gives rise to the itchiness sets the parameters and the range of motion that teachers have when they seek the resolution to their angst.

Teachers rarely have access to the inner workings and invisible forces of decision making in the “they.” It all remains hidden behind what is in plain sight:

This tradition deprives Dasein of its own leadership in questioning and choosing. . . . The tradition that hereby gains dominance makes what it ‘transmits’ so little accessible that at first and for the most part it covers it over instead. What has been handed down it hands over to obviousness; it bars

access to those original ‘wellsprings’ out of which the traditional categories and concepts were in part genuinely drawn. (Heidegger, 1977/2008a, p. 65)

Since teacher leadership is touted as the opportunity for teachers to influence decisions and other decision makers, then teacher leaders require access to those inaccessible wellsprings. Teacher leadership itself is treated as an obviously worthwhile goal for teachers and school systems, so Heidegger prompts me to ask: For all we see in teacher leadership’s possibilities, what are we educators, researchers, and policymakers not seeing? The wellsprings that teachers might want to affect as teacher leaders are hidden from sight and buffered from questions. Complex situations are polarized into dualities that do not leave room for subtleties (Levin, 1985); possibilities are leveled down to the average, and teachers can only invite into their field of vision the options that “they” release to them.

Speaking for others. *Dasein* loses sight of its Self and the full range of possibilities that exist in the day-to-day situations as unnoticed patterns of thought cover them over. Language itself becomes one of those patterns, used by “them”—and therefore by us. Language is the house of *Dasein*’s being, yet talk in the they-world is made up largely of empty words, idle talk, buzz words, and catch phrases. Those are the terms that travel. Before exploring the implications for the teacher-as-teacher-leader, attention should be paid to the consequences for any and all *Dasein*:

Thus by its very nature, idle talk is a closing-off, since to go back to the ground of what is talked about is something which it *leaves undone*. . . . Ontologically this means that when *Dasein* maintains itself in idle talk, it is—as Being-in-the-world—cut off from its primary and primordially genuine relationships-of-Being towards the world, towards *Dasein*-with and towards its very Being-in. Such a *Dasein* keeps floating unattached yet in so doing, it is always alongside the world, with Others, and towards itself. (Heidegger, 1962/2008, pp. 213-214)

Proximity to the world, others, and self is enough to give teachers the tantalizing sense that authentic existence is out there somewhere, but idle talk forces distance. “They” talk teachers-as-teacher-leaders into between-ness. Teachers are between the “ground” of what teacher leaders want to affect and that which “they” allow them to affect. Teachers float between whom they could be if they reattached to genuine relationships-of-Being and who they are as a disconnected everyday self. Idle talk’s part is to heighten the teacher leader’s proximity to the everyday expectations and possibilities of the “they” and, therefore, to dampen awareness of the possibilities rooted in Being that lie fallow.

Paradoxically, idle talk derives its heft from its emptiness. As Heidegger (1962/2008) explains, “Losing itself in the publicness and the idle talk of the ‘they,’ [*Dasein*] *fails to hear* its own Self in listening to the they-self” (p. 315). Idle talk’s noisiness distracts *Dasein* from itself and from the relatedness of its Being, but idle talk’s insidiousness allows it to go undetected. George Orwell (1946) was also concerned about the dangers of hollow language: “This invasion of one’s mind by ready-made phrases . . . can only be prevented if one is constantly on guard against them, and every such phrase anaesthetizes a portion of one’s brain” (p. 8). In the everyday, the inauthentic they-self cannot hear its own Self think. If the idle talk sounds right enough, we will not notice that some things—or some parts of our Selves—are missing.

Words can be particularly effective if they are seductive. “Teacher leadership,” as a name and term, seduces with the promise of liberatory and participatory decision making. Fitzgerald and Gunter (2008) wonder, however, if

“teacher leadership” instead names an orthodoxy that disguises a means of getting teachers to do more work without disrupting the very bureaucracy teachers think they are transforming; to question the timing, aims, and accepted modes of researching and designing teacher leadership amounts to heresy, they say, and so questions go unasked. Furthermore, Fitzgerald and Gunter argue that this unquestioned orthodoxy is perpetuated linguistically:

What remains problematic is that some teachers remain labeled as ‘leaders’ or are afforded a ‘leadership’ task and function and, accordingly, remain trapped in discourses either because of an abiding willingness to name or label or, more significantly, because there has been no systematic questioning of why these labels were constructed and applied in the first instance. (p. 338)

Authentic names call forth some essential quality of the being; labels ascribe characteristics to an object. Unquestioned labels seem like names because “the undefined word creates a sense of consensus by attributing to it an assumed, stale, and shared meaning” (Scott, 1999, p. 90). Is “teacher leadership” a label “they” created? Or can “teacher leadership” as a name evoke possibilities that resonate authentically with teachers?

Even though the “they” takes on this anonymous yet ubiquitous quality, we catch glimpses when the dehumanizing effects of disconnected language are at work. Orwell (1946) describes what it is like to watch a speaker afflicted by everyday jargon and clichés:

When one watches [a speaker] on the platform mechanically repeating the familiar phrases . . . one often has a curious feeling that one is not watching a live human being but some kind of dummy. . . . A speaker who uses that kind of phraseology has gone some distance toward turning himself into a machine.

The appropriate noises are coming out of his larynx, but his brain is not involved, as it would be if he were choosing his words for himself. (pp. 6-7)

Education is not immune to tried-and-true phrases. Our hypothetical speaker would likely say the teacher is the greatest in-school influence on student learning; the teacher can be a change agent; teacher voice should be elevated; we want all children to be college- and career-ready; data-driven decision making should govern schools; and drive-by professional development should become extinct. Orwell defends language from tyranny of misuse (whether its genesis is laziness or political conformity), yet what he touches on is the power of empty, idle language to distance us from our Selves and our world, and to distance us from those around us who would otherwise be able to interact with us authentically—as beings-in-Being together in a world.

Freire shares Orwell’s concern. Writing about inauthentic words in an educational and political context, Freire (1970/2010) notes that only authentic words rouse the kind of reflection and action that allow people to reclaim themselves:

An unauthentic word [is] one which is unable to transform reality. . . . [T]he word is changed into idle chatter, into *verbalism*, into an alienated and alienating “blah.” It becomes an empty word [By] creating unauthentic forms of existence, [unauthentic words] creat[e] also unauthentic forms of thought... (pp. 87-88)

If teacher leaders can speak only the jargon and phraseology that “they” write, others are not able to interact with the authentic *being* who occupies a teacher leader role, and the teachers in those roles cannot interact with fellow teachers, researchers, and policymakers as their true Selves. What would it mean for teaching (and for beings-as-teachers) if all teachers wrote and spoke authentic words able to transform reality?

What would they say?

Managing people. When “everyone is the other, and no one is himself” (Heidegger, 1962/2008, p. 165), impersonal language and distant relationships encourage people to see each other in limited ways, as representatives of a situation or job description, or for what they can offer. Yet, put quite simply, “A man is not a thing” (Heidegger, 1977/2008d, p. 147). Things exist within the world but not in the same way that *Dasein* does. A thing’s character is not that of possibility, care, language, and Being. Things exist in and of themselves, a mode of being that Heidegger calls present-at-hand. When we interact with a present-at-hand object it becomes ready-to-hand; that is to say, it exists to us as the range of ways we can use it or not use it. A hammer, for example, has meaning to us when it comes into our frame of reference as that-which-can-hammer. Ready-to-hand things are objects “we do not let ... ‘be’ as we have discovered that they are, but work upon them, make improvements in them, or smash them to pieces” (Heidegger, 1962/2008, p. 117). People, on the other hand, exist in Being, in possibility, in care. A person is not that-which-can-be-smashed. A person *is*.

To believe that *Dasein* ever should or could be ready-to-hand is an “ontological perversion” (Heidegger, 1962/2008, p. 293). Yet we often treat people like equipment, as “something that gets managed and reckoned up” (p. 336). To evaluate people for their usefulness is to assess their value, and valuing “does not let beings be. Rather, valuing lets beings be valid—solely as the objects of its doing” (Heidegger, 1977/2008b, p. 251). It can be helpful and even necessary to categorize and classify individuals who work in a school system by, for example, salary and

subject matter expertise; however, the danger is that school systems (and even research discourse) can distort beings-as-teachers into a standing-reserve in which “everywhere everything is ordered by stand by, to be immediately on hand, indeed to stand there just so that it may be on call for a further order” (Heidegger, 1977/2008e, p. 322). Teachers become a group of passive objects to be sorted into sample sizes, various leadership roles, and implementers of new reform initiatives. In the “they” of everyday teaching, teacher leaders “are not definite Others. On the contrary any Other can represent them” (Heidegger, 1962/2008, p. 164). Interchangeable, teacher leaders become a manipulatable mass, a singular variable that turns teachers into “actualities in the interaction of cause and effect. We encounter beings as actualities in a calculative businesslike way” (Heidegger, 1977/2008b, p. 223). To “think that reality can be transformed mechanistically” (Freire, 1970/2010, p. 130) is to negate the ontological core of our being, which is to become more fully human.

The they-world as Heidegger describes it has much in common with the world of the oppressed as Freire describes it, particularly where its effects on people are concerned. This is a world that “attempts to control thinking and action, leads women and men to adjust to the world, and inhibits their creative power” (Freire, 1970/2010, p. 77). How do beings—teachers—experience adjusting to a world that sees them as members of a standing reserve? What happens when the they-world is inserted between beings who could otherwise seek authentic relationships? Heidegger (1962/2008) offers an answer that could easily be a description of a faculty meeting, grade level team meeting, or professional development session led by a teacher coach:

The Other is proximally ‘there’ in terms of what “they” have heard about him, what “they” say in their talk about him, and what “they” know about him. Into primordial Being-with-one-another, idle talk first slips itself in between. Everyone keeps his eye on the Other first and next, watching how he will comport himself and what he will say in reply. Being-with-one-another in the “they” is by no means an indifferent side-by-side-ness in which everything has been settled, but rather an intent, ambiguous watching of one another, a secret and reciprocal listening in. Under the mask of “for-one-another,” an “against-one-another” is in play. (p. 219)

Teachers are set into motion, constantly interpreting self and others in the context of the interpretation that has already been written for them. During my time as a teacher I wondered constantly which version of myself my colleagues wanted to interact with, if what I needed to say as a team leader is what I should say as a teacher. Others have noticed this phenomenon as well. Goffman might say teachers are on stage playing parts. Leander and Osborne (2008) found that teachers facilitating professional development anticipated likely responses of colleagues, administrators, and students (whether they were physically in the room or not) and adjusted what they said based on those hypothetical responses. I wonder now if I treated the different roles I could play as ready-to-hand versions of myself.

Teacher leaders, then, not only reside between the roles of teacher and administrator; ontologically, the being-as-teacher leader is also between an authentic self and the version of teacher leader created by “them.” A teacher leader is neither here, authentically being with Self and Others, nor there, with the colleague who sees him as a ready-to-hand stand-in for the teacher leader designation. What is the experience of being in the space between roles and between versions of oneself?

Getting lost. To lose oneself in the “they,” according to Heidegger and Freire, is to risk dehumanization. Being lost in this way is a stasis masquerading as resolve:

“Dasein, as a they-self, gets ‘lived’ by the common-sense ambiguity of that publicness in which nobody resolves upon anything but which has always made its decision” (Heidegger, 1962/2008, p. 345). This kind of dehumanization is essentially an unbecoming. If teachers lose themselves in teacher leadership as conceived in the everyday word of the “they,” fulfillment in their careers can elude them:

People are fulfilled only to the extent that they create their world (which is a human world), and create it with their transforming labor. The fulfillment of human kind as human beings lies, then, in the fulfillment of the world. If for a person to be in the world of work is to be totally dependent, insecure, and permanently threatened—if their work does not belong to them—the person cannot be fulfilled. Work that is not free ceases to be a fulfilling pursuit and becomes an effective means of dehumanization. (Freire, 1970/2010, p. 145)

Teaching and teacher leadership are often overtaken by idle talk, policies, programs, and expectations that seem to have been written by everyone and no one. Teachers who are owned cannot be the authors of their own fulfillment.

Work that is disassociated from authentic selves causes teacher leaders to be distant from their sense of Being. According to Freire (1970/2010), when people are unable to seek their own fulfillment they learn to distrust themselves and forget that they “‘know things’ they have learned in their relations with the world and with other women and men” (p. 63). They become objectified, trapped within an “inauthentic view of the world and of [our]selves” (p. 64), existing under those in control and at the mercy of the idle language that controls us, our own language “stolen” (p. 134). If teachers must speak of their practice in the language of policymakers, legislators, researchers, and administrators, and if teachers can only see the possibilities and decisions inscribed within that language, are teachers able to seek authentic fulfillment? Freire would say no: “To alienate human beings from their own decision

making is to change them into objects” (p. 85). Becoming ready-to-hand means that a sense of the fullness of being is lost.

For Freire, dehumanization (when one group deprives others of reflective action) leads to oppression. While it might seem hyperbolic to say that teachers are oppressed within their work-worlds, it would be fair to say that teachers as a group are under the control of a system that confines them to certain spheres of action, limits their range of available possibilities, and often requires them to translate their practice into the languages of policymakers, legislators, and data-gathering surveys. Teachers could be said to experience oppression as a form of preventing “people from being more fully human” (Freire, 1970/2010, pp. 56-57). In Heideggarian terms, this kind of oppression is an act of “*not* let[ting] beings be the beings which they are and as they are. Then beings are covered up and distorted. Semblance comes to power” (Heidegger, 1962/2008, p. 127). If teacher leadership seems to hold promise within education, and if the “they” creates teacher leadership in order to create meaningful possibilities for teachers’ career advancement, how can a teacher sense whether or not possibilities are authentic to her own being, or if those possibilities were written for her in idle talk by “them?”

Reclaiming possibility. Teachers’ everyday world is not necessarily as awful as it might sound right now. “They” is one mode of existence. Within everyday life and the chattiness of idle talk it is possible to be with others as they truly are in their being and not as they are distorted and seem to be. The openness of a question makes authentic relation possible even as getting lost in the “they” is also always possible: “When there is a crisis, we have to ask the question ‘which way?’ When the way

turns into a question, you become aware of possibility” (Ahmed, 2010, p. 218). It is, therefore, possible to be with others such that those beings see you beyond what the world allows you to reveal. It should be possible for beings who teach to feel career growth that resonates with the care and possibility that call to them.

The trick is to be attuned to those relationships and possibilities despite the noisiness and everything that conceals fundamental relatedness among humans as beings. Rejecting the objectification “they” can inflict (i.e., the ways teachers can be classified, sorted, studied, and evaluated as nameless groups), “wherever man opens his eyes and ears, unlocks his heart, and gives himself over to meditating and striving, shaping and working, entreating and thanking, he finds himself everywhere already brought into the unconcealed” (Heidegger, 1962/2008, p. 324). There are ways out of inauthentic life and work. Heidegger calls this space of authenticity the clearing—a letting be, a nearness to Being. When teachers sense possibilities that they cannot yet name or understand, i.e., possibilities for career growth outside the boundaries of the roles the “they” has created for teachers, then teachers are called by this clearing.

If “they” are so pervasive, how do teachers recognize the call of these authentic possibilities? Heidegger (1962/2008) describes one such experience that could give teachers a sense of themselves:

When they devote themselves to the same affair in common, their doing so is determined by the manner in which their Dasein, each in its own way, has been taken hold of. They thus become *authentically* bound together, and this makes possible the right kind of objectivity, which frees the Other in his freedom for himself. (p. 159)

To sense authentic possibility is neither solitary nor selfish; it is communal and depends upon teachers’ connections to others. What is the nature of those affairs that

would call teachers-as-teacher-leaders into themselves and into each other? What does it mean to be both bound to others and free at the same time?

Freire also considers authenticity a state in which people are liberated, not bound, by their relationships to others. Regarding each other with solicitude and not as ready-to-hand objects, people engaged in “authentic reflection consider neither abstract man nor the world without people, but people in their relations with the world” (Freire, 1970/2010, p. 81). It is through this kind of shared experience that individuals—that teachers—might begin to perceive new possibilities for themselves, for “as women and men, simultaneously reflecting on themselves and on the world, increase the scope of their perception, they begin to direct their observations towards previously inconspicuous phenomena” (Freire, 1970/2010, p. 82). Teachers as beings-in-the-world can hope to understand what it means to be teachers and teacher leaders by asking questions about their work-worlds and how they experience them.

Within the world of teaching and leadership, teacher leaders’ actions and possibilities are shaped by the tasks that their principal, colleagues, or school system allow. When I sat in my classroom I felt stifled by those limitations. Other teachers experience those limits similarly or differently and inspiring; however, “once [we] come to perceive these [limit] situations as the frontier between being and being more human, rather than the frontier between being and nothingness, [we] begin to direct [our] increasingly critical actions towards achieving the untested feasibility implicit in that perception” (Freire, 1970/2010, p. 102). Thoughtful reflection makes all the difference. Dwelling in the “they” need not be permanent, and it need not be

experienced as an inescapable limit situation. Heidegger (1962/2008) explains in ontological terms:

Proximally *Dasein* is ‘they,’ and for the most part it remains so. If *Dasein* discovers the world in its own way and brings it close, if it discloses to itself its own authentic Being, then this discovery of the ‘world’ and this disclosure of *Dasein* are always accomplished as a clear-away of concealments and obscurities, as a breaking up of the disguises with which *Dasein* bars its own way. (p. 167)

If teachers, when they feel a need for growth and chafe against the limits of their roles, sense possibility rather than limitation and reside for just a while in that perception—that space between limitation and freedom of authenticity—they can turn towards the clearing, and in so doing they can turn towards an unobstructed view of themselves.

Beings in the Clearing

In the midst of beings as a whole an open place occurs. There is a clearing. . . . Only this clearing grants and guarantees to us humans a passage to those beings that we ourselves are not, and access to the being that we ourselves are. (Heidegger, 1977/2008d, p. 178)

To exist, etymologically, is to stand forth or appear (Harper, 2018), and it is in this sense that beings come into themselves and to each other in the clearing. They appear to one another as beings within the world, not as objects upon which the world acts. It is in this openness that teachers-as-teacher-leaders might find themselves “again in [their] possibilities” (Heidegger, 1962/2008, p. 184) and with the ability to “unveil” reality (Freire, 1970/2010).

Just as the “they” is a mode of existence and not a name for particular people, the clearing is a mode of existence, not a place. It is a freedom that reveals itself as letting beings be. . . . To let be—that is, to let beings be as the beings which they are—means to engage oneself with the open region and its

openness into which every being comes to stand, bringing that openness, as it were, along with itself. (Heidegger, 1977/2008c, p. 125)

For teachers, the clearing could be a sense of purpose and meaning, a dissolution of the structures and expectations that stand between her being-as-teacher and her relationship with the other beings, spaces, or relationships in her care. In this clearing, how would teachers experience the possibilities they could only barely sense before? How would they name the possibilities that beckon? Is it called “leadership?”

Liberatory language. Freire might say that in this clearing they can find liberation. People would discover “they can no longer continue to be ‘things’ possessed by others” (Freire, 1970/2010, p. 174). Instead they sense that they exist in relation with others, and, going further, they would experience the communal and liberatory nature of language. Whereas in the “they,” “Dasein fails to hear itself, and listens away to the ‘they’” (Heidegger, 1962/2008, p. 316), in the clearing teachers can language their own experiences. They can leave the false, idle words for true, liberatory words: “To exist, humanly, is to name the world, to change it. Once named, the world in turn reappears to the names as a problem and requires of them a new naming. Human beings are not built in silence, but in word, in work, in action-reflection” (Freire, 1970/2010, p. 88). The clearing is imbibed with language and togetherness, for it is language that actively brings beings together in the clearing. It is in language that teachers can begin to name their own experiences with each other and see possibilities that exist beyond the names and categories the “they” prescribe.

The call. The call of teacher leadership that so many teachers hear often pulls them towards roles, responsibilities, and career paths that school systems, organizations, and policymakers have carved out for them, or that the teachers create

for themselves by patching several of these options together. Is this call towards teacher leadership a teacher's sense of the clearing, the mode of existence in which they can become more fully who they are? Is the call of teacher leadership the call *to become*? Breaking away from the "they" requires a teacher to be open to the liberatory language with the call that brings beings into the clearing; "calling [is] a mode of discourse" (Heidegger, 1962/2008, p. 316) in which the teacher answers.

A teacher might sense possibility within what "they" call leadership. A teacher leader can also sense something more around him, just as the two-dimensional square in Flatland (Abbott, 1884) does when the sphere visits; he can see only a slice of the sphere but knows the voice comes from above and around rather than within his own plane. As a teacher I felt trapped in the classroom, and the moment when I sensed the existence of other possibilities, I had to act on them. Many teachers are able to effect great change in their schools, districts, states, or even on a national scale. It was as Heidegger (1962/2008) describes: "In the tendency to disclosure which belongs to the call, lies the momentum of a push—of an abrupt arousal. The call is from afar unto afar. It reaches him who wants to be brought back" (p. 316). How do teachers experience the compulsion to turn towards the call of their own potentiality-for-Being, the call that both opens the clearing and exists within the clearing? What Heidegger (1962/2008) describes is reminiscent of the flat square's unforeseen visit from the three-dimensional sphere:

Indeed the call is precisely something which *we ourselves* have neither planned nor prepared for nor voluntarily performed, nor have we ever done so. 'It' calls, against our expectations and even against our will. On the other hand, the call undoubtedly does not come from someone else who is with me in the world. The call comes *from me* and yet *from beyond me and over me*. (p. 320)

To be called by the “call of care” (p. 332) is to be compelled by something larger than ourselves. It is an undeniable link between ourselves and those for whom we are responsible. What is the experience of hearing a call in the clearing that must be acted upon with individuals who are still lost in the “they?”

It cannot be easy. Teachers in the clearing, called by expanding possibilities, must see the situation as the “they” sees it and then must transcend that situation. The teacher must act within the leadership and work-world the “they” create *and* also exist above and around that world, in the openness of the clearing where possibilities reside. *Flatland* tells the story from the two-dimensional square’s perspective, but the teacher leader must know something of the sphere’s experience as well. The sphere can see all of the square’s Flatland. To enter into a relationship with the square, the sphere must sacrifice a fullness of representation and be satisfied with seeming flat, too, knowing that the square can only see a circle, a slice of the sphere’s full being. What does it mean to dwell in the clearing, to come into presence fully in the clearing, and also have to return to semblance in the they-world of everyday work? The clearing is where *Dasein* can take authentic action—where beings-as-teachers take action for students, teachers, and their own selves through critical reflection rooted in potentiality and care. What might it mean for schools to be called by and make space for the clearing?

A sense of how teachers might experience the tensions of teacher leadership—at once called into the clearing of authentic possibility and pulled into closed off pathways “they” sanction—and the triumphs begin to open the space wherein researchers, policymakers, and teachers themselves can understand more of what

teacher leadership is like. However, many questions remain. Much is still obscured. What is the teacher's experience of hearing a call come from within? Is it a different call than the one made by students? What is the teacher's experience of teacher leadership?

A methodology that hopes to open the phenomenon of teacher leadership and the possibility of more authentic relationships with the teachers who experience it must attend to the power of language as both a liberatory and an oppressive force; it must attend to what it means to dwell in one mode of existence as an object while sensing the possibilities of another mode of existence—possibilities which awaken a sense of oneself and others; and it must attend to “the *Being* of entities” (Heidegger, 1962/2008, p. 59) as it is experienced authentically and as it is obscured. The question, *What is the lived experience of teacher leadership?* calls for hermeneutic phenomenology.

Hermeneutic Phenomenology: A Methodology of Being and Care

The starting point of this text is the belief that human science research in education done by educators ought to be guided by pedagogical standards. The fundamental model of this approach is textual reflection on the lived experiences and practical actions of everyday life with the intent to increase one's thoughtfulness and practical resourcefulness or tact. (van Manen, 1997, p. 4)

A question that takes lived experience as its object requires a human science methodology that lets “what shows itself be seen from itself, just as it shows itself from itself” (Heidegger, 1977/2008a, p. 81). An educational phenomenon such as teacher leadership requires a research methodology that resonates with pedagogy and with persons as beings in care, possibility, and language who seek authentic relationships in and with the world.

The Doors Hermeneutic Phenomenology Opens

Max van Manen (1997) interprets hermeneutic phenomenology for human sciences such as education, where phenomenology defines the orientation of the researcher towards the phenomenon and the beings who experience it, and hermeneutics describes the methods used to interpret “the ‘texts’ of life” (p. 4) that give access to the experiences. This tradition of scholarship attempts to understand what it means *to be*, in this case, a teacher leader—not as “they” would define or envision it, but as beings experience it:

Phenomenology aims at gaining a deeper understanding of the nature or meaning of our everyday experiences. Phenomenology asks, “What is this or that kind of experience like?” It differs from almost every other science in that it attempts to gain insightful descriptions of the way we experience the world pre-reflectively, without taxonomizing, classifying, or abstracting it. So phenomenology does not offer us the possibility of effective theory with which we can now explain and/or control the world, but rather it offers us the possibility of plausible insights that bring us in more direct contact with the world. (p. 9)

Hermeneutic phenomenology produces thematic, textual renderings designed to evoke as fully as possible what it is like to experience some aspect of our human existence. Its burden of proof, so to speak, is to generate descriptions that “reawaken or show us the lived quality and significance of the experience in a fuller or deeper manner” (p. 10). The realm of teacher leadership can always be described ever more deeply, and so phenomenology is a humble science. The descriptions of teacher leadership that emerge in this study will “always [be] *one* interpretation, and no single interpretation of human experience will ever exhaust the possibility of yet another complementary, or even potentially *richer* or *deeper* description” (p. 31). The phenomenologist knows that whenever an aspect of an experience is brought forward,

another aspect is concealed. This hermeneutic fact is not a weakness, however. On the contrary, “hermeneutics prevents our phenomenology from falling into an ultimately self-destructive complacency and dogmatism, for it will always insist on the openness of the phenomenon and the correlative incompleteness of the process of inquiry” (Levin, 1985, p. 15). While I would never presume to produce a description that *is* right, phenomenology requires me to render a description that *feels* right, is recognizable, and can be carried forth as the basis of action sensitive pedagogy that authentically engages beings-as-teacher-leaders.

Pedagogical insights about the pedagogical phenomenon come to light, and “those who partake in it produce *action sensitive knowledge*” (van Manen, 1997, p. 21). Usually the idea of progress is predicated on advancements in institutions that lead to predictable and ever more positive, measurable outcomes, but van Manen (1997) explains:

[W]hat does progress mean in phenomenological human science research? It does *not* necessarily imply that sound human science will lead to increasingly effective management or control of human behavior. In fact, just the opposite may be the case. Human science operates on the principle of the recognition of the existence of *freedom* in human life. And self-consciously free human beings who have acquired a deepened understanding of the meaning of certain human experiences of phenomenon may in fact be less susceptible to the effective management or control of others. (p. 21)

Human science research, such as phenomenology, affects institutions through the accumulated thoughtfulness of individuals and measures the effectiveness of those impacts solely on the basis of the liberation (in Freirian language) or authenticity (in Heideggarian language) of the individual beings who participate in an institution. This idea of progress defined as educators drifting from control seems antithetical for application in an education research context that would seek to affect something as

systemic as teacher leadership. Progress of this nature is actually in keeping with the stated goals of teacher leadership though. Teachers who are no longer carefully managed by others are teachers who can empower themselves and who are more likely to make professionally autonomous decisions that positively impact schools.

Invitation to the Reader

The reader partakes as much as the phenomenologist or the participants in the study. Phenomenological texts that render lived experience crave the reader's participation, much like the chorus at the beginning of Shakespeare's *The Life of Henry V* appeals to the audience to see and hear actual horses stomping the ground when the actors imagine them into being in the empty spaces on the stage. The horses materialize at the place when the audience's and the actors' attentions converge. Likewise, phenomenological descriptions are meaningful when they mean something to their reader. As Lakoff and Johnson (1980/2003) explain, "Meaning depends on understanding. A sentence can't mean anything to you unless you understand it. Moreover, meaning is always meaning to someone. There is no such thing as a meaning of a sentence in itself, independent of any people" (p. 184). The reader, thus, is situated amongst the phenomenological description and the pedagogical actions he or she might pursue as a result of interacting with the text. The phenomenological text asks the reader to sense and act upon those pedagogical insights.

Teacher Leadership and Hermeneutic Phenomenology

Hermeneutic phenomenology can be found in the interactions among writer, reader, and text; it is also found in the relationship between the methodology and the phenomenon. It resonates deeply with the question of what it means to be a teacher

leader and with what it means to orient oneself—as this study’s researcher, participant, or reader—towards teacher leadership. That phenomenological orientation is maintained out of a commitment to supporting persons who seek fullness of being as a teacher through pathways that we call teacher leadership. As an approach to questions of meaning that go on to inform reflective action, “phenomenology is not concerned primarily with the nomological or factual aspects of some state of affairs; rather, it always asks, what is the nature of the phenomenon as meaningfully experienced? ...[of] some experience that human beings live through?” (van Manen, 1997, p. 40). Like teaching and teacher leadership, phenomenology maintains openness to possibilities, even contradictory ones, rather than provide essentialized answers.

In so doing, it treats the phenomenon of teacher leadership and those who experience it “not as a problem to be solved, but as a question of meaning to be inquired into” (van Manen, 1997, p. 24). The deeper the inquiry, the more direct the contact we have with teachers’ experiences of teacher leadership. The “moral force” (p. 12) of our interactions with teachers and their leadership resides where that contact occurs. Experiential, relational, and open to possibilities, a hermeneutic phenomenological investigation has the promise of pushing the boundaries of the language teachers have at their disposal to word their own worlds.

The Hermeneutic Circle

The reader of this study will proceed linearly through the text from my turn towards the phenomenon in Chapter One, to an existential exploration of teacher leadership in Chapter Two, to the methodology in Chapter Three, to themes that

emerge through dialogue and interpretation in Chapter Four, and to pedagogical insights in Chapter Five. Despite the linear progression, every section was created by the recursive reflection and writing of the hermeneutic circle. The questioning, seeking, rendering, and acting of hermeneutic phenomenology requires both vigilant attunement to the phenomenon and caring attachment to the teacher participants, their language, and the liberation that comes with authenticity. Rigor for the phenomenologist is found in the hermeneutic circle.

The hermeneutic circle is not circular in the contemporary sense of being lost, fruitless, or unfocused. First, the hermeneutic circle requires absolute attunement to the phenomenon, the researcher's own preconceptions, the meanings that reside within the texts of the phenomenon, and the participants' experiences. Furthermore, circular interpretation is in keeping with the very nature of understanding. We have some sense of what something might mean, however limited our sense or however covered that something might be; we hazard a guess, that is we throw forward our initial interpretation onto the phenomenon; we pay attention to the rightness of the initial interpretation; we adjust. To understand better, we do not need to remove ourselves from the circle and from interpreting the phenomenon of teacher leadership.

It is worth quoting Heidegger (1962/2008) at some length on this point:

What is decisive is not to get out of the circle but to come into it in the right way. This circle of understanding is not an orbit in which any random kind of knowledge may move; it is the expression of the existential *fore-structure* of Dasein itself. It is not to be reduced to the level of a vicious circle, or even of a circle which is merely tolerated. In the circle is hidden a positive possibility of the most primordial kind of knowing. To be sure, we genuinely take hold of this possibility only when, in our interpretation, we have understood that our first, last, and constant task is never to allow our fore-having, fore-sight, and fore-conception to be presented to us by fancies and popular conceptions, but

rather to make the scientific theme secure by working out these fore-structures in terms of the things themselves. (p. 195)

To understand better, we must enter the circle. The “fancies and popular conceptions” that obscure the experience of teacher leadership can shed light on how schools conceptualize teachers in leadership roles. The phenomenological endeavor, however, is directed at the lived experience, not experience as it is conceptualized. Expressing what I bring to the phenomenon as a teacher leader is part of the phenomenon, as long as I remember, “a needle knows everything lengthwise” (Stafford, 1977, p. 91). With every new possible meaning, the circle commands the phenomenologist to test it against others’ encounters with the phenomenon in experience, descriptions, dialogues, and other artifacts from our world. The hermeneutic circle provides direction and momentum for the disciplined search for meaning about teacher leadership.

The “Doing” of Hermeneutic Phenomenology

And since *to know* the world is profoundly to *be* in the world in a certain way, the act of researching-questioning-theorizing is the intentional act of attaching ourselves to the world, to become more fully part of it, or better, to *become* the world. (van Manen, 1997, p. 5)

Like teacher leaders, hermeneutic interpretations and phenomenological insights are always in the process of becoming. The approach to hermeneutic phenomenology described here creates a “dynamic interplay” among teacher leadership and the principles of research laid out by van Manen (1997, 2014). In *Researching Lived Experience*, van Manen (1997) describes the six fundamental research activities that characterize hermeneutic phenomenological research:

1. turning to a phenomenon which seriously interests us and commits us to the world;

2. investigating experience as we live it rather than as we conceptualize it;
3. reflecting on the essential themes which characterize the phenomenon;
4. describing the phenomenon through the art of writing and rewriting;
5. maintaining a strong and oriented pedagogical relation to the phenomenon;
6. balancing the research context by considering parts and whole. (pp. 30-31)

They work together in the hermeneutic circle and bring us closer and closer to teachers' lived experiences of teacher leadership.

Turning to a Phenomenon

In Chapter One I turned towards the phenomenon of teacher leadership. In order to be aware of, animated by, and not constrained by my own understandings of and experiences with teacher leadership, I had to bring them forward and then open them up to new possibilities. Gadamer (1975/2004) explains how this is accomplished:

Understanding begins . . . when something addresses us. This is the first condition of hermeneutics. We now know what this requires, namely the fundamental suspension of our own prejudices. But all suspension of judgments and hence, a fortiori, of prejudices, has the logical structure of a *question*. The essence of the question is to open up possibilities and keep them open. (p. 298)

Without examining my own questions, I run the risk of encountering the texts of teacher leadership through whatever fore-meanings I have developed but not yet, as Gadamer says, "put at risk," or not yet put into conversation with what another person or text says. The turn, then, is not only the attention that the researcher pays towards the phenomenon, but it is also the attention paid to the researcher's relationship with the phenomenon. This relationship manifests itself through questioning and is maintained by a steadfast orientation towards the phenomenon as it is experienced. A strong orientation requires care, discernment, and openness: "Only the person who knows how to ask questions is able to persist in his questioning, which involves being

able to preserve his orientation towards openness. The art of questioning is the art of questioning ever further—i.e., the art of thinking” (p. 360). Questioning as a method enables me to maintain my orientation towards teacher leadership and keep my own understandings in play and in check in the hermeneutic circle. Questioning is also the most important strategy I have as a researcher to invite my participants and readers to turn toward the phenomenon of teacher leadership with me.

Investigating Experience

Seeking teacher leadership as a phenomenon requires surpassing the limits of the everyday language that currently animates it, interacting with rich descriptions of experience that illuminate aspects of the phenomenon, and dialoguing with teachers who experience teacher leadership. Investigating teacher leadership requires collecting “data,” which in phenomenology is any material that evokes lived experience.

Direct and personal experience of teacher leadership—both the phenomenologist’s and others who experience it—is the first way into the hermeneutic circle. Narratives, anecdotes, diaries and other forms of phenomenological information give access to my and their lived experience. Those lived accounts can be found in published or private works, and they can be solicited during the course of a phenomenological investigation via dialogue, interview, observation, or structured exercises with participants.

Teacher leadership can also be sought in teachers’ worlds. Art, literature, phenomenological scholarship, biographies, research literature, etymological sources,

films, poems, and paintings all serve as repositories of human experience, in this case of teachers' experiences of leadership. As van Manen (1997) explains:

The aim is to construct an animating, evocative description (text) of human actions, behaviors, intentions, and experiences as we meet them in the lifeworld. To this purpose the human scientist likes to make use of the works of poets, authors, artists, cinematographers—because it is in this material that the human being can be found as *situated person*, and it is in this work that the variety and possibility of human experience may be found in condensed and transcended form. (p. 19)

Idioms and etymology are storehouses of experiences, because the moment of word or phrase origin is when it is most closely related to the lived experience that gives rise to the need for the word or phrase. Lived meaning often resides there. Previous phenomenological works can already begin to uncover meanings within the phenomenon at hand, and art attempts to convey what this or that experience is like or the significance it holds for us in our lives.

Investigating the metaphors of teacher leadership can also lead to authentic expressions of lived experience. As Lakoff and Johnson (1980/2003) note, “In most of the little things we do every day, we simply think and act more or less automatically along certain lines. Just what these lines are is by no means obvious. One way to find out is by looking at language” (p. 3). For example, orientational metaphors permeate teacher leadership language. Teachers move *up* into formal leadership roles; they go *back* to the classroom; they inspire change from the *bottom up*. These conceptual metaphors sculpt the sense that teachers make of their own careers, yet we tend to notice everyday metaphors only when they are purposefully disrupted (Freire, 1970/2010). Heidegger (1977/2008g), as one illustration, startles us into encountering our passive acceptance that “up” is power: “That nobody wants any

longer to become a teacher today, when all things are downgraded and graded from below (for instance from business), is presumably because the matter [of teaching] is exalted, because of its altitude” (p. 380). The reader is brought up short by Heidegger’s reversal of directionality where teaching occupies the high ground. Encounters with the conventional metaphors we speak and live can open a space in which teachers create new metaphors to name the lived experience of teacher leadership. Metaphors are experience’s way of transcending the boundaries we place on experience with ill-fitting language.

Reflecting on Themes

As van Manen (1997) explains, “We are not primarily interested in the subjective experiences of our so-called subjects or informants for the sake of being able to report on how something is seen from their particular view, perspective, or vantage point” (p. 62). We are interested in bringing some elements of an experience into focus and available for contemplative reflection. Thematizing, like dialogue, requires methodological rigor in keeping with the requirements of the hermeneutic circle. The four existentials of lived body, lived space, lived time, and lived others serve as reflective guides; other texts beyond those that directly narrate participant experiences bring the themes into focus. Disciplined reflection inspires the phenomenologist to constantly ask if this theme is essential (van Manen, 1997), i.e., is teacher leadership itself without it? Determining and rendering those themes is an act of interpretation by the researcher. A theme could emerge because participants have similar recurring experiences, yet a theme could also emerge from an experience shared once, or even in the silences. Sometimes

. . . the margins rise at last
over their brims
and flood the text. (Tranströmer, 2006a, p. 154)

Phenomenological thematizing is not about reporting trends; it is about attending to the descriptions (be they from poetry, research literature, or conversations conducted during the study) that say something to us about what it means to be a teacher leader.

Describing the Phenomenon

Meaning is multi-dimensional and multi-layered. That is why the meaning of pedagogy can never be grasped in a single definition. Human science meaning can only be communicated textually—by way of organized narrative or prose. . . . To do human science research is to be involved in the crafting of a text. (van Manen, 1997, p. 78)

In phenomenology, writing *is* research. It is a search through language for the meaning of a phenomenon. The act of rendering a phenomenon through themes is a form of seeking in which I write my way to understanding in constant conversation with the phenomenon and the reader. Just as forms of art, participant descriptions, other phenomenological texts, examples, and anecdotes, etc., can be reflected upon by participants and phenomenologists to allow themes to emerge, those same artifacts can be used by the phenomenologist to make those themes accessible to the reader. Descriptions of themes that belong to a phenomenon help us find our way into a relationship with those who experience that phenomenon. The phenomenologist carefully chooses examples and texts, varies them, and writes her way through many revisions until they evoke for the reader what the phenomenon is like as it is lived. An evocatively rendered theme will allow the reader to see through the examples to the significance at the very core of the phenomenon.

Maintaining a Pedagogical Orientation toward Teacher Leadership

A pedagogical orientation means that we care for the persons in the phenomenon and that the phenomenological work is a form of action research. Phenomenology demands that the process of engaging in hermeneutic phenomenology—as the researcher, the teacher participants, or as the reader—brings us more fully into the responsibility we have towards teachers. As van Manen asks, what can phenomenology do with us? This is a question of moral, pedagogical action. Aoki (2005a) explains that those who work with teachers have a responsibility to understand the network of meanings that teachers share “to be able to venture forth together in [a] meaningful way” (p. 131). Accepting the call of attending to teachers can awaken possibilities, sensibilities, and spaces in which we are mutually responsible to each other as beings. Engaging with pedagogical insights that spur action is part of the nature of hermeneutic phenomenology.

Greene (2009) offers this closing description of the clearing that comes from acting through pedagogic insights:

We cannot negate the fact of power. But we can undertake a resistance, a reaching out towards becoming *persons* among other persons, for all the talk of human resources, for all the orienting of education to our economy. To engage with our students [and teachers] as persons is to affirm our own incompleteness, our consciousness of spaces still to be explored, desires still to be tapped, possibilities still to be opened and pursued. At once, it is to rediscover the value of care, to reach back to experiences of caring and being cared for. . . We have to find out how to open such spheres, such spaces . . . (p. 95)

Phenomenology is the drive to open those spaces, “to recover reflectively the grounds which, in a deep sense, provide for the possibility of our pedagogic concerns” (van Manen, 1997, p. 173).

Balancing the Parts and Whole of the Phenomenon

The tradition of phenomenology carries several approaches to research that can bring the parts and whole of a phenomenon forward. This study makes use of themes as the organizing principle for Chapter Four, in which sections delve successively deeper into the phenomenon. Each theme's section explores "its meaningful aspects" in a structured analysis that attempts to provide clear pathways into the phenomenon while not inauthentically divorcing intertwined aspects of lived experience from each other. Taken together, themes can help us understand the significance of each part and the lived nature of the phenomenon as a whole.

Towards Teachers Dwelling in Leadership: Process of Engagement

Two truths draw nearer each other. One moves from inside, one moves from outside
and where they meet we have a chance to see ourselves.
(Tranströmer, 2006b, p. 106)

The ontology of Being, the ways we can come to know the world through hermeneutic phenomenology, and the call of teachers in teacher leadership require a process of engagement with the phenomenon that is imbued with relation, language, and care. In keeping with the nature of teacher leadership policies (which seek greater teacher agency) and the nature of phenomenology (which insists upon unapologetic consideration of what it means *to be* in the world), the teachers in the study worked with each other and with me in an attempt to sneak past the everyday language of teacher leadership. The study was situated within van Manen's approach to hermeneutic phenomenology and had three main phases: 1) identifying or generating lived experience descriptions and other sources of phenomenological insight; 2) hermeneutically analyzing the collected phenomenological material in order to

illuminate themes; and 3) writing such that themes and pedagogical insights become clear and open to further reflection and action. These phases did not proceed linearly, often occurred simultaneously, and were all enacted through conversations, textual analysis, and writing; however, they represented three distinct foci for my research efforts.

Encountering Teachers-as-Participants

Six teachers were engaged in the study in 2016. They had a variety of teacher leadership experiences situated in multiple contexts, were reflective about those experiences, and were willing to share them with others. Six was the target group size, because it was large enough to generate a rich body of phenomenological descriptions and small enough to ensure group conversation dynamics could be fully engaging and based on mutual trust.

The first filter I applied to create a pool of possible participants was to identify teachers 1) in my professional networks (as a teacher, as a researcher, or as staff for the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards) who had formal roles and/or peer acknowledgement as teacher leaders, 2) who lived or worked in close enough geographic proximity to participate in face-to-face group conversations, and 3) with whom I have developed some rapport through professional interactions. To expand the number of possible male teachers in the pool, I solicited recommendations via snowball sampling.

The rationale for having personal knowledge of and experiences with the participants was that delving into teaching and teacher leadership experiences required participants to be honest and vulnerable; furthermore, the current climate of

high-stakes testing and evaluation systems does not encourage teachers to open up to a stranger, especially not to the degree required by a study of this nature.

Additionally, because I had witnessed first-hand how possible participants interacted with other teachers in the past, I could select those teachers whom I believed, based on my experience leading professional learning communities and committees, would nurture a safe group environment for group conversations and engage actively in hermeneutic conversations.

I narrowed down the list of possible participants by considering various combinations of individual characteristics and professional backgrounds. The goal was to create a group that would allow diverse experiences to emerge. Groupings in phenomenology are not intended to achieve some degree of representation for the sake of generalizability; they are intended to bring forward as many facets of the phenomenon in question as possible, so we might encounter it as deeply as possible. Teacher leadership and other relevant literature shows that many factors influence teacher leaders' professional lives, including the school principal or other school leaders (Murphy et al., 2009), content areas or grade levels they teach (Little, 1995; Xie & Shen, 2012), years of experience (Angelle & DeHart, 2011), culture of their professional learning communities (J. P. Scribner, Hager, & Warne, 2002; J. P. Scribner et al., 2007), the formal roles they hold (Lieberman & Friedrich, 2010a), district or state policies (Phillips, Desimone, & Smith, 2011), being a National Board Certified Teacher (Loeb, Elfers, & Plecki, 2010), and gendered and/or racialized power dynamics (Gonzales & Lambert, 2001; S. P. Scribner & Bradley-Levine, 2010). The group of participants I invited, therefore, came to teaching by a variety of

paths, were diverse in gender and ethnicity, and combined had experiences in multiple states and school districts, school types, formal and informal roles, grade levels, and content areas (see Appendix A: Participant Characteristics).

I contacted six potential participants via email to determine their general interest in and availability for the study. One teacher declined the offer, and so a seventh teacher was sent the general interest inquiry. The six teachers who expressed interest received a letter of invitation introducing the study in detail (see Appendix B: Cover Letter) and participated in a face-to-face meeting to discuss the consent form and their rights as a participant (see Appendix C: Consent Form). Because I interacted with five of the six participants in various work experiences, I clarified that I would take no actions that would affect pre-existing working relationships as a result of their participation (or not) in the study. Pseudonyms are used per participants' requests.

Ambereen. Ambereen came into teaching through an alternate pathway and quickly forged paths for expanding her knowledge, whether support from her administrators was there or not. She has expertise in reading support, English language arts, special education, and publication production. She is passionate about her work with the union, because it provides her with support for the advocacy she does for students and teachers. Her drive to pursue equity and respect for diversity comes from her experiences as a Muslim woman and what she learned from National Board Certification about how to reflect on a situation and decide which actions are likely to lead to improvements. Moving on to a full-time union position, Ambereen is finishing her last year in the classroom.

Chris. It could be said that Chris has done it all. Within the span of thirteen years he has taught in elementary, middle, and high schools in four school districts across the country, some rural and high poverty, others urban. He specializes in special education, but also teaches mathematics, science, and general K-8. He is a self-described wanderer who seeks new experiences, so he has been a teacher, an administrator of various kinds, and a special education director. He is on the lookout for helping marginalized students and teachers, because he felt marginalized in schools as a child.

Dolly. Dolly has taught for sixteen years in the same middle school in a large urban environment. She works with the nearby university that places preservice teachers in her classroom for mentoring during their practicum. She has led professional learning for the school and district, sometimes at her principal's request and sometimes because she sees a need and makes it happen. She has served as department chair, but did not like having to transmit the principal's and district's messages when they ran counter to what she thought was best for students. Dolly did not want to be a teacher, because none of her own teachers inspired her except for one. She began her career in publishing, was bored, and responded to an advertisement for an alternate route teacher licensure program. She has been teaching language arts ever since.

Michelle. Michelle also became a teacher after changing careers. During her fourteen years in the profession, she has taught in one large, suburban district. She taught both middle and high school and became an assistant principal one year prior to the study. While she was a teacher, Michelle was always looking for roles that

would let her support teachers, their craft, and students. She was a mentor teacher to newly hired teachers, became the lead mentor for the high school, and then became the lead mentor for the entire school district. She has been a team leader and department chair, too. Michelle walks the hallway greeting students as an assistant principal the same way she used to greet them as they walked into her classroom—with a huge smile, eye contact, and a genuine, “How are you doing?”

Rose. Rose has twenty years of teaching experience in high school social studies, geography, and instructional technology. At the time of this study, she is completing her last year as a social studies teacher before she transitions to being the school’s library media specialist. Rose pulls knowledge of technology, psychology, and trends in education into her conversations, and she actively wonders how they influence her career. Does her generation affect what she wants out of teaching? How can she keep her focus on the “whole child” when she is teaching if the atmosphere around her focuses on the child’s test scores? Rose is honest about how negative experiences in her career have provided the impetus to move to new opportunities, and she is hopeful her new role in the library will allow her to teach teachers and students in the ways she wants to.

Tanya. Tanya’s first professional job was working on alumni programs for her college, and she did not know what she wanted to do beyond that. She noticed several alumni had library degrees, so she decided to pursue one because she loves research, writing, and reading. After seventeen years in teaching as a library media specialist, Tanya has worked with students in elementary, middle, and high schools; she has taken over existing programs and opened new schools; she has worked in

affluent and high-needs schools. She curated her professional experiences to become as well-rounded as possible. In addition to seeking positions that fulfill her thirst for knowledge, she serves on several committees, leads professional development, and is an adjunct faculty member. Tanya is always looking for the placement that will allow her to serve the school, teachers, and students in the ways she envisions. At the time of the study she is closing out the school year in one school and will begin the next at a new one.

Entering into Phenomenological and Hermeneutic Conversations

To respond to the question, *What is the lived experience of teacher leadership?*, the participants and I gathered descriptions of those experiences. To put it simply, “the ‘data’ of human science research are human experiences” (van Manen, 2014, p. 314). My task as the researcher was to elicit from participants the words and representations that described their experiences as authentically as possible.

Accordingly, I allowed the phenomenon to come from them and did not impose upon them to discuss any particular features or categories of teacher leadership. In this way, the exploration could be open to the elements of the phenomenon they brought forward. The study involved a series of individual and group conversations and opportunities for the participants to provide spoken, written, and visual representations of teacher leadership experiences. These conversations had a dual purpose: to collect examples of human experience (phenomenology) and to reflect on the meanings that might reside in those examples (hermeneutics).

A combination of individual and group engagement is consistent with the nature of teacher leadership. Far from a solitary endeavor, teacher leadership requires

drawing others into nearness to accomplish a goal. Communal dialogue, or collaborative analysis as van Manen calls it, is also more likely to lead to descriptions of and insights about teacher leadership that are grounded in their experiences, not programs or theories. When a member of a dialogue throws a possible meaning out into the open space of the conversation, it encounters the other members' horizons of experience. From there new understandings can be shaped and tested. Regarding individual conversations, teaching itself requires space and time for individual reflection and processing (Hargreaves, 1993), and a certain amount of vulnerability is involved in opening up one's practice. Individual conversations created a more cocooned, slower-paced space for that kind of reflection. They also allowed me to probe individual experiences more deeply with the teacher who had them.

I engaged participants in dialogue, not protocol-based interviews, throughout the individual and group conversations (van Manen, 1997). We asked and pursued questions of teacher leadership together, upholding the rigor of our investigations by keeping each other attuned to the phenomenon. In order to open the space, I acknowledged verbally that most of them had previous experiences with me in one or more roles and explicitly stated that I was not participating as a representative of any particular work role (e.g., National Board staff, former teacher colleague, researcher). Rather, I was orienting my full being toward them and the phenomenon. I engaged with the teachers as a fellow member of a group of educators called by teacher leadership in keeping with our being as caring teachers, and also because communal reflection and interpretation of this sort leads to deeper understandings of the phenomenon and of each other:

To speak to one another means to say something to one another; it implies a mutual showing of something, each person in turn devoting himself or herself to what is shown. To speak with one another means that together we say something about something, showing one another the sorts of things that are suggested by what is addressed in our discussion, showing one another what the addressed allows to radiate of itself. (Gadamer, 1975/2004, p. 409)

Dialogue can bring persons and phenomena into the clearing together.

All conversations were face-to-face, audio recorded, and professionally transcribed. Individual conversations were one-to-two hours long and took place at a location selected by the participant; for all participants except for one we met at the participant's school. Group conversations were two-to-three hours long and took place in an office centrally located among all participants. Photographs were taken of any artifacts the participants created during conversations.

Over the course of four months, I conducted a series of conversations and written reflections (see Appendix D: Sequence of Interactions and Participant Involvement). There was zero attrition among participants, although two were unable to participate in the group conversations due to unavoidable scheduling conflicts. When a teacher was unable to participate in any portion for any reason, he or she was released from that portion without penalty. I began by having an individual conversation with each participant. There were several purposes to this first meeting. The first was to establish a relationship of personal sharing. While the method of establishing a willingness to share differed depending on the participant and my prior relationship with her or him, I used such strategies as sharing one of my own experiences or jointly reflecting on a teacher leadership experience we experienced together in the past. The second purpose was to learn information about the participant's career path and begin to explore together how the participant came to be

called by teacher leadership. Third, we discussed the nature of phenomenological descriptions. I provided guidelines and tasked each participant with describing in writing a significant moment or instance when they felt like a teacher leader (see Appendix E: Reflective Assignment #1). Participants submitted their responses to me in advance of the first group conversation so I could gauge their comfort level with the guidelines for writing lived experience descriptions and develop a sense of how to open the space for group engagement.

The first group conversation involved participants first sharing examples of the teachers who served as leaders for them and influenced their practice. Participants also responded to this prompt: Describe a time (most recent, first time, or a time you remember strongly) when you either felt like a teacher leader *or* when you were called a teacher leader but did not feel like one. After time to write, I prompted everyone to convey how it felt without using words. Teachers' language is saturated with jargon, catch phrases, and initiatives, and this task challenged them to convey the experience without relying, even unconsciously, on everyday professional lingo. They had a variety of arts and crafts materials at their disposal (see Appendices F-H for photographs). Each teacher shared her rendering as the group asked questions to delve more deeply into what the experience was like and to share what seemed similar to or different from experiences they had.

As this and later conversations in the series proceeded, we asked questions in order to create a variety of examples and to be responsive to the wonderings we had in our joint explorations. Some of these questions were:

1. Describe a moment or instance when you felt like a teacher leader.
2. How did the idea of becoming a teacher leader first arise?

3. How did you talk about being a teacher leader with other teachers, and what were some of those instances like?
4. How did it feel to walk into your own classroom after the first time you began your leadership role?
5. What was it like to walk into another teacher's classroom as a teacher leader?
6. When and how did you start to notice the needs of your colleagues?
7. Describe a time when you were collaborating with another teacher and felt like a teacher leader.
8. Can you tell me about a particularly significant experience in your career that influenced the decisions you made to take on new teaching assignments or leadership roles?
9. Was there a time when you felt connected to your colleagues even though they were physically absent?
10. How do you open engagements with your colleagues?
11. Can you describe a time when your colleagues approached you to discuss their practice?

In the next individual conversations, participants were given the opportunity to share additional experiences in response to questions we generated and to bring an artifact that conveyed what one or more of those experiences were like. Most decided to share spoken stories while Tanya brought a photograph.

The second group conversation began by inviting participants to do a gallery walk among the various images that participants or I had used during previous conversations to invoke various aspects of teacher leadership experiences.

Participants selected one or more artifacts, or located a new artifact, and completed a written reflection about the artifact and an event or aspect of their own leadership that resonated with it. Participants shared reflections, and we explored the metaphors, significance, and experiential themes that emerged. The final individual conversations allowed me and the participants to share any other examples or reflections that had come forward for us. I also shared emerging themes to explore if or how they were recognizable and rich to the participants.

Thematizing Teachers' Experiences

Having engaged in this process, I began reading and questioning all of the artifacts (e.g., transcripts and additional descriptions that relate to facets of teacher leadership), writing my way to understanding, and rendering in writing the themes that announced themselves through the voices and professional lives of my participants. The themes were nestled within and suggested by descriptions the participants and I shared, our reflections about those descriptions, and our communal wonderings about what calls us, as teachers. Drawing on van Manen's (1997) methods, I discovered themes in several ways. I approached holistic reflection on artifacts by asking the text what meaning(s) about teacher leadership resided there and what questions it raised. Secondly, I identified subsections of transcripts that were phenomenological descriptions. Thirdly, I identified words and phrases, often metaphors, that were thick with lived meaning. In every case I asked myself, "What is going on here? What is this example an example of?" (p. 86). This layer of meaning making is the responsibility of any hermeneutic phenomenological researcher, and the themes that came forward are the sparks of possibility that announced themselves to me.

Using ATLAS.ti, I tagged each level of artifact with thematic names and refined them as necessary. The tagging was not a form of coding; it was an information management strategy and served as a reflective tool. I reflected on both the artifact text and the tags in an iterative process of uncovering lived meaning, "testing" those meanings against other descriptions of those themes or teacher leadership that exist in lifeworlds outside the study, and constantly weighing thematic

expressions that emerged from some artifacts against the phenomenon as a whole. Along the way, I invoked the four existentials of lived body, lived other, lived time, and lived place to spark new lines of inquiry. Writing the themes involved inviting other texts into Chapter Four that house descriptions of what it means to be a teacher leader. The paintings, poems, plays, research, and philosophies were used to bring us into closer contact with that teacher leadership is like.

Once themes had been written and revised several times, I engaged two teacher leaders who were not a part of this study to read them. Their guiding question was whether or not or to what extent they recognized these themes as either being a part of their own experiences or being a part of experiences they or other teacher leaders could have. They also shared with me the questions that the themes raised. Their comments were used to revise the themes and generate pedagogical insights in Chapter Five.

Looking Ahead to What Lies Beyond

“The Gallery” is a deeply personal meditation on the profession of psychiatry, and yet I find myself in these verses.

If I could at least make them realize
that this trembling beneath us
means we are on a bridge.

Often I have to stand motionless.
I am the knife thrower’s partner at a circus!
Questions I tossed aside in rage
come whining back

don’t hit me, but nail down my shape
my rough outline
and stay in place when I’ve walked away.

...

It happens rarely
that one of us really *sees* the other[.] (Tranströmer, 2006a, p. 154)

My own experiences with teacher leadership were fraught with hope and terrible frustration. Those uncertainties and questions borne out of stagnation at first held me in place, but I stepped away and can now look back at the shadow I left behind. I know that other teachers might have similar experiences; I also know that there are so many other experiences of teacher leadership to encounter. Do teacher leaders sense bridges when others sense precarious rumblings? What holds other teachers and their experiences in place? Is it knives and nails, or something softer like hope and possibilities? The “trembling beneath” speaks of frustration and warnings, but also invokes activity, movement, and life as bridges invite us to cross into whatever will come next. When teachers can truly see one another and be seen by others, when teachers can speak true words to each other and name that which they seek in their own professions, then we can walk across the bridge towards new possibilities. The next chapter creates space for an encounter with the six teachers who spoke those true words to each other and attempted to find those new possibilities.

CHAPTER FOUR: RENDERING THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS WHO CLEAR THE WAY FOR PEDAGOGY

Phenomenological thematizing recognizes that “if we go back *behind* what is said, then we inevitably ask questions *beyond* what is said” (Gadamer, 1975/2004, p. 363). Beyond the limits of current arrangements and language is precisely where teachers-as-teacher-leaders and our encounters with them need to go.

Rendering teacher leadership experience through themes aims to offer an interpretative, rich, and deep description. The goal is not an essentialized expression or *better* understandings than we had before:

Understanding is not, in fact, understanding better, either in the sense of superior knowledge of the subject because of clearer ideas or in the sense of fundamental superiority of conscious over unconscious production. It is enough to say that we understand in a *different way, if we understand at all.*” (Gadamer, 1975/2004, p. 296)

Themes help us see in new ways. These themes are a part of what teacher leadership is, but could never be all of what teacher leadership is. No matter how deeply we understand a phenomenon, we will never exhaust all it could mean. Rendering themes is a hopeful form of seeking, not unlike the process of becoming teachers undergo as they live questions of meaning.

Questions about the meaning of teacher leadership continue to announce themselves. Placing ourselves in the world of a teacher leader, we might wonder, how does a teacher leader see a school? How does a parent? A principal? A teacher? A teacher leader? The school’s architect? A student? *The Teacher’s Name Day* by Giocchino Toma (1879) shows students celebrating their teacher and gives us an opportunity to peer into their classroom. If we imagine the woman peering in from

the doorway is a parent, what does she see as she looks at the classroom scene in this painting? Her own child will likely be the center of her attention along with how other children and the teacher interact with her child, if her child seems happy and is treated well. The environment exists in relationship to her child. If the woman in the doorway is a new teacher, she might notice how the classroom is organized and that the teacher in the classroom has formed close bonds with her students and wonder how to do that with her own students.

If the woman in the doorway is an experienced teacher and a teacher leader, what do we think she might notice? Through pedagogic eyes, she would see individual children and the group they create, the energy and feel of the relationship that exists among the teacher and students, if the resources in the room are sufficient for instruction, if the teacher being celebrated is “in charge” or if she is losing control of the classroom and the students will have a hard time transitioning from celebration to lessons. She would notice the children who are not participating. Why does the girl in the middle of the painting have her head down? Is she crying? Why are the children in the very back apart from the group? The teacher leader might wonder how to open a space with the classroom teacher to inquire about those children together. She might worry if the teacher in the classroom will accept the invitation.

The teacher leader is simultaneously outside, next to, in, and around this classroom and the pedagogical moment it contains. She attends to it, or borrowing from the Latin *attendere* for attend, she stretches herself toward it (Harper, 2018). She can see the teacher, the pedagogical situation, and environment in ways the teacher cannot see. The teacher leader in the doorway might be motivated to attend to that

moment because, in Tanya's words, "you want yourself to be better and you want other teachers to be better as well. You know there's a greater purpose out there, because there's more to it than just you." The teacher leader in the doorway is not only tending to the teacher and the student who make up the pedagogical relationship or to her own professional learning; she is tending to pedagogy itself. What is the lived experience of teachers who occupy that doorway and so many other spaces as teacher leaders?

Teacher Leaders Are Bodies of Pedagogic Knowledge

It is no coincidence professions refer to their accumulated wisdom, practices, knowledge, theories, etc., as their *body* of knowledge. While the Oxford English Dictionary (2018) defines "body" as "a comprehensive and systematic collection of information," when viewed as an idiom or metaphor it hints at the more primal, lived nature of accumulated knowledge. We take it into ourselves, and it animates us. How do teachers' walking, talking, teaching, leading bodies experience the professional knowledge of teacher leadership?

Being in the Know

Dolly appreciated "knowing things firsthand and being in the know" when she was a department chair a few years ago. On the surface that statement can be, and would often be, taken to mean she likes to add information to a storehouse of informational "whats:" what is happening, what the central office is doing, what the principal wants to do next. Looking again, hints of what it is like experientially to be a teacher leader peek through. Dolly engages as a being, in a world of pedagogical possibilities, who embodies teaching and acts on and with that world. Being-in-the-

know is being in the flow and being in tune with pedagogical spaces. In the 1690s, “first hand” was used as an expression for the person who made something (Harper, 2018). To know firsthand as a teacher leader is to make something of the world, to make the classroom, school, or system better for pedagogy. Her knowing makes something of pedagogy and makes something new of herself.

Teacher leaders, beings-in-the-know with knowledge they live, of course incorporate a great deal of knowledge about teaching, schools, and children into their practice, but they do not experience knowledge transactions as if at a bank:

Pedagogical thoughtfulness and tact are not simply a set of external skills to be acquired in a workshop. A living knowledge of teaching is not just head stuff requiring intellectual work; it requires authentic body-work. True pedagogy requires an attentive attunement of one’s while being to the child’s experience of the world. (van Manen, 2015, p. 83)

Tanya’s pedagogical body “feel[s] it all, down to [her] core in the center of [her] being,” a description echoed by van Manen (2015) when he says, “The pedagogy of being a good teacher is that good teachers are what and how they teach” (van Manen, p. 135). Incorporation, from the Latin *corpus*, literally means “to bring into a body” (Harper, 2018). Leder (1990) explains that when incorporation happens, “[m]y arms know how to swim, my mouth can at last speak the language. . . . A skill has been incorporated into my bodily ‘I can’” (p. 31). Knowledge acquisition is only one element. A teacher leader knows how to enlist sight, touch, smell, hearing, taste, limbs, emotions, perception, and intuition in the service of pedagogy. Teacher leaders’ faces and hands and postures know how to animate pedagogy and make it visible to others.

Most often this phenomenon wherein teacher leaders are bodies of knowledge is expressed in research and policy as a criterion: teacher leaders must achieve some level of mastery and confidence before they can have enough credibility to lead other teachers (e.g., Hatch et al., 2005; Muijs & Lindsay, 2008) and continue to grow their expertise and influence in those roles (Wenner & Campbell, 2016). How is that knowledge lived by teacher leaders though? Leonard Nathan's (1968) poem "No Guide, No Sight" is the lamentation of a rejected tour guide who is denied the opportunity to nurture the relationship between tourists and tombs. At one point he explains:

And there are so many tombs to see:
At dusk, at dawn, in sunlight, moonlight
To be gaped at, climbed
In, pictured, then abandoned
For another. And no guide, no sight.
For only eyes that have studied stone
Till it seems transparent may reveal
What lies under the work and what gives the death
Of one poor self this lasting feel. (p. 301)

In the moment when a tourist encounters something new, the guide can provide insight about the tomb or setting that opens up many more facets to the tourist, so he can meet this new place in more of its fullness. In so doing, the guide takes care of the tourist, the tomb, and the encounter.

What the poet points out is that not just anyone can be the kind of guide who nurtures the encounter. Anyone can read facts out loud to a group, but the true guide is one who has "studied stone / Till it seems transparent [and] may reveal / What lies under the work." The true guide sees and feels no separation between himself and the place or history in his care, because he has encountered it himself so many times

before, from so many different angles, and with a curious, loving inquiry. In John Moffitt's (2003) words, "To look at any thing, / If you would know that thing, / You must look at it long . . . you must / Be the thing you see" (p. 125). Without a guide who has done so, tourists cannot see around and through in fullness; they see only what comes across in a flat photograph, which is no real sight at all. A teacher leader is a guide such as this.

Rose describes how her own experience and knowledge positions her to support a colleague who is writing his submissions for National Board Certification:

By helping him, I realized the value of the [Board certification] cohort more than when I was actually in it myself. He didn't have a cohort, so I was his only real outside eyes. This only served to heighten the pressure I felt about doing a good job, which then made me feel more like my certification had a purpose beyond just helping me or enhancing my pay.

Because Rose had experienced the work of writing those portfolio submissions herself and had her own guides along the way, she feels as though she can guide him. One might say she is an old hand at preparing entries for certification, an idiom that captures the way the body absorbs experience. Her "outside eyes" learn how to notice ways to help her colleague improve. Rendering her own cohort experience transparent, her eyesight is enlisted for a pedagogical "purpose beyond." The tour guide goes beyond stating facts and also describes, "This tomb is best seen when the moon is full; / This in sun" (Nathan, 1968). There is the same connection, wonder, and humility in the face of the pedagogy within Rose's bodily "I can."

Like Tanya and Rose, Chris invokes the expanded field of vision that his pedagogical body of knowledge opens for him. He likes to counteract quick, blanket solutions that suffocate teaching and learning. He gives pedagogy time to breathe:

“Slow down. What are we really looking at? Yes. There's a problem. The big, broad office says this [initiative] isn't enough, but really what's going on?" He says he can “zoom out” or “zoom in.” His pedagogic eyes see through and around the initiative to how it is truly functioning in the lives it touches. He orients his colleagues to the dilemma with a question. He saturates the space with wonder about teaching and learning, because doing so is incorporated into his “I can.” He brings pedagogy forth from within his own body of knowledge.

Hungry for Know-How

Teacher leaders feed their insatiable bodies of knowledge. Rose calls it an “itch” and a need that demands to be “filled.” Rose explains, in a way that Chris echos, “As long as I’m getting stuff out of it I’m going to keep doing it, but if I stop getting something out of it, I leave.” When we are hungry, it gets to a point where all we see around us is food—its nearness or farness in time and in space. How soon can I eat, and how far do I have to go to get it? Barriers (Do I have enough money? My children need their food first) are formidable, and our own hunger can go from a quiet request to a booming demand. Other parts of our body recede; other tasks or needs fade into the background.

Teacher leaders proactively hunt for pedagogical opportunities that can feed their need to grow as learners. The participants give many examples of what they do and what they learn, often in long, cascading lists that convey momentum and drive: college courses, “anything the county offered that was free” (Rose), interactions with the district’s policies and networks, “anything where I could know more” (Rose), research, exposure to resources in different grade levels, moving to a new state,

working with older or younger students than in the past, starting a new program, moving to new schools where “having access to what’s going on” (Chris) or “something different” (Tanya) is possible. Rose, for example, is passionately drawn to learning as much about technology as possible. Technology demands her attention:

I just wanted to use the technology. I want to know about it and use it. I want that technology. I want access to it. I want information, so I know I have to be in a certain position to get it. I didn’t change positions for the new position. It was just knowledge. I just wanted to know more.

Rose’s hunger creates the drumbeat for her professional life.

Even though knowledge is usually conceived of as belonging to the mind, this body of knowledge is not confined to books or abstract realms of thought. Just as drumbeats drive music, teacher leaders’ bodily know-how compels teachers to move. When teacher leaders learn a new bodily “I can,” they cannot ignore the implicit invitation to convert it into an “I do.” Jellaludin Rumi (2003) evokes the ways intelligence moves and how we are animated as bodies with and of knowledge:

There are two kinds of intelligence: one acquired,
as a child in school memorizes facts and concepts
from books and from what the teacher says,
collecting information from the traditional sciences
as well as from the new sciences.

With such intelligence you rise in the world.
You get ranked ahead or behind others
in regard to your competence in retaining
information. You stroll with this intelligence
in and out of fields of knowledge, getting always more
marks on your preserving tablets.

There is another kind of tablet, one
already completed and preserved inside you.
A spring overflowing its springbox. A freshness
in the center of the chest. This other intelligence
does not turn yellow or stagnate. It’s fluid,
and it doesn’t move from outside to inside

through the conduits of plumbing-learning.

This second knowing is a fountainhead
from within you, moving out. (p. 127)

True teacher leaders *are* pedagogy, “in the center of the chest,” and the fluid movements to and fro, from within and without, create the rhythm of their professional learning. Some participants explain:

I’m real good . . . with data. You give me either building data tools or if we look at what’s going on based on whatever you’re putting together, and I’m like, let’s ask the data a question. (Chris)

Anytime I get those opportunities and then can come back and use them in some way, show somebody something, work together on a project, whatever I get, I think those would be the ones that I enjoy the most. (Tanya)

Leder (1990) calls this ebb and flow a “from-to movement of the ecstatic body [that] opens us to reciprocal exchange” (p. 34). Moving towards new pedagogical knowledge in order to incorporate and act from it, Chris propels his pedagogical being outward with a question. Tanya seeks, returns, and opens collaborative spaces.

Being-in-the-know means being in pedagogy as it swirls back and forth and through, moving in many directions. The actions teacher leaders can and do perform in pedagogical spaces also feed their own bodies of knowledge. In Levin’s descriptive language, when teacher leaders learn, they discover and redesign their bodies of knowledge: “[T]he world I discover leads me to redesign the body itself. Just as the ‘from’ incorporates what once was ‘to,’ the ‘to’ rebounds to transform the ‘from’” (p. 34). Tanya calls it a

give and take, [where] everybody has something to contribute. I tend to be drawn toward those experiences where when you share, you get more out of it. . . . I want to be there. Doing stuff and helping other people, and not preachy, because I want to constantly improve.

Being-in-the-know is an action. For those who act in the world with pedagogical bodies of knowledge, the world is saturated with teaching and learning. Learning means the teacher leader and those who engage in teaching and learning with them are never the same for long.

Knowing Enough to Get Around

I want to return to Tanya's statement above: "I want to be there." If teacher leadership is "being there," how do teacher leaders experience being there? Tanya hints at a lived sense of being somewhere by talking about the kinds of engagement that happen: doing, helping, improving, sharing. She places her pedagogical body of knowledge at the center of the action. She *finds her place* as a teacher leader when she is *there*, as opposed to somewhere else where pedagogy could never be. How do teacher leaders experience the places where they feel like they have arrived, so to speak, as teacher leaders? When they are finding their way, how does their environment, in Leder's words, stand forth to them?

Dolly has to "have the lay of the land" in order to do anything she might consider teacher leadership. Tanya can be the teacher others call for help, because she has "been around the track a few times." She explains, "I've been around the block. I've been at different schools. I've been at different levels. I feel more responsible." All of that experience means they have lived knowledge that shapes how they see the situations around them. Their schools, offices, or situations invite them to act in ways that open up new pedagogical possibilities, and those are invitations that would not be visible to a teacher who does not have that experience. Teacher leaders shape the schools and spaces around them with their pedagogical vision. The tour guide in the

poem discussed above would say that the schools or systems around the teacher leader become transparent, “For only eyes that have studied stone / Till it seems transparent may reveal / What lies under the work” (Nathan, 1968). The school or office of the teacher leader becomes a place where Chris can walk into the office of his boss and say it is time for the schools to move to an inclusion model and the university will provide professional learning. Dolly can tell the principal she wants to lead an effort to update the school’s use of social media. Rose can start a program for parents who were English language learners.

Offices and auditoriums offer themselves up to new possibilities with teacher leaders; doors ask to be opened, microphones turned on, and partnerships activated. Leder (1990) gives the example of how a lake changes its appearance with the experience of its onlooker: “The lake outside my window . . . looks different than in my preswimming days, when it could not be crossed and offered no access” (p. 32). Teachers, for example, build that kind of lived knowledge of a classroom or school through all of their senses, and so classrooms offer different energies and possibilities to novice teachers and to experienced teachers. Max van Manen (2015) offers a description of a teacher who is comfortable, in Dolly’s words, or “at home,” in van Manen’s, in a classroom, and it makes me wonder about what it is like for teacher leaders to be comfortable looking out for pedagogy in whatever environments they may occupy:

I am visiting a school, and I accompany a teacher into her classroom. I cannot help but notice how competently the teacher moves around. While I feel, as a visitor, somewhat strange and awkward in this place, she moves amongst the tables without bumping into them, turns to her own desk, holds the door for students who enter the room, talks to one student then to another while doing this or that, and I notice how she simultaneously tunes in to the gathering

class. . . . Obviously this teacher feels at home in this room, in a way that allows her to act with such confidence and self-forgetful ease. Indeed, this teacher is so effective precisely because she can forget herself and completely absorb herself in this situation with her students. (p. 182)

How do classrooms, schools, and other places that can nurture pedagogy look to teacher leaders who feel at home? How are those places experienced when they still feel like visitors?

Some teachers walk right into principals' offices, while others might not even feel like they should make appointments. Dolly explains a school can look very different to her before her body of knowledge incorporates what it needs to accept explicit or implicit invitations to lead:

If I hadn't been in the building so long I wouldn't have taken on this leadership role, I think, as a person new to the building or new as a new teacher. Only because I know the people, I feel comfortable with the people, that I feel able to take on some of those other leadership roles.

With time in a building comes internalized knowledge about the people, habits, feelings, and openings for teaching and learning. Instincts kick in about whom to talk to and when. Tanya thinks it obvious, as the school lead on an initiative, to invite one teacher to join her by mentioning the due date for forms to the county and invite another by mentioning she will not have to throw out all her old lessons, just adapt them. Tanya enacts this know-how (based on lived knowledge of the space that subsumes herself, teachers, school, and district), so instantaneously she is at a loss for words when asked how she came to take those approaches. Her body of knowledge knows what to do.

This space-based pedagogical know-how also means a teacher with fifteen years of experience can feel like a visitor among new colleagues or in a new setting.

Rose has taught for many years but is nervous about a new job in the school library; Tanya plans to lay low every time she switches schools or school levels; Ambereen takes time to build up her expertise in her school before she starts to ask questions about equity and diversity. Building that confidence allows a teacher leader to become less of a visitor who enters but has not yet bonded with a place and more of a dweller with “everyday familiarity” (Heidegger, 1962/2008). Such a teacher leader has a sight that understands what is needed to open pedagogical spaces beyond the ones they create(d) in their own classroom with their own students.

When a teacher leader’s body of knowledge registers the “demands and solicitations” (Leder, 1990, p. 34) for pedagogy that reside in a school, the paths toward realizing those opportunities appear. A teacher leader looks around a school and sees “I can’s.” Continuing with Dolly’s experience:

I know this person is super organized, and I know if I say, “Oh, let’s do this,” they’re going to have all their ducks in a row. I know this person over here has great ideas but maybe not as organized, so I’m maybe going to go to them and ask, “Well, what do you think about this?” I know who is good at doing what. I know these people work really, really well together, so if we’re on a committee I’m going to say, “Hey, let’s work on this and that type of thing.”

Those same individuals were present in the school when Dolly was a new teacher, but she feels like she has arrived as a teacher leader when they transform before her eyes into colleagues with whom she can support pedagogy.

Max van Manen (2015) describes how teachers adapt their bodies to the dimensions of classrooms, and that awareness expands for teacher leaders. Just as with teachers, teachers-as-teacher-leaders’ “instant knowing what to do ensues from one’s body and from the things and atmosphere of one’s world” (p. 182). When teachers experience themselves as teacher leaders, their felt sense extends through

and then beyond their own classroom and students. Their body of knowledge is a knowledge of action and of practice that takes in “the mood that belongs to [their] world at school, the hallways, the staffroom” (p. 182), classrooms, and conference rooms. Being shaped by those places, people, feelings, and skills, the teacher-as-teacher-leader moves to shape that world in pedagogy’s image.

Disembodiment: Know-It-Alls, Titles, and Talking Heads

Leder (1990) offers a description of embodied knowledge that resonates with the experiences the teacher leaders described: “Practiced hands can tie a knot that words cannot explain. A doctor’s trained ear can recognize the arrhythmia inaudible to the book-fed student. In the broadest sense, mentality is indeed distributed throughout the lived body” (pp. 109-110). The teachers who wonder about teacher leadership with me in this study believe expertise resides in every pore of their pedagogical know-how while simultaneously asserting, “I don’t have the answers” (Tanya, Rose, Chris) or “I don’t want to come in and say, ‘We’re doing this’” (Chris, Rose, Dolly). Sometimes this tendency to eschew authority is ascribed by researchers to an egalitarian culture among teachers that is unaccepting of one teacher being elevated above another (e.g., Fairman & Mackenzie, 2015; Wenner & Campbell, 2016), sometimes to the point where they will cut each other down “like crabs in a bucket.” Teacher leaders’ experiences and the conversations in this study cause me to wonder, instead, if the language that springs from teacher leaders’ bodies of knowledge—their body language—is one of questions and openings rather than of answers. Tanya wonders about this phenomenon, notably in the form of a question, during one of our group conversations:

Wouldn't you say that the most fulfilling leadership opportunities you have are the ones that allow you to learn as well? Is that because we're teachers that it's more important to us that if we're taking on this leadership role we're also learning and growing at the same time?

If teacher leaders' bodies of knowledge are devoted to nurturing pedagogy, and pedagogy inspires teachers and students both to remain incomplete and open to learning, then perhaps teachers-as-teacher-leaders are the "text and texture of [their] questions" (Heidegger, 1977/2008g, p. 385).

Students have ways of reading teachers' body language to determine if they are true teachers or "clock punchers" with a teaching job who "do what [they] have to do and then head out" (Tanya). How do teachers tell if someone is authentically situated as a teacher leader? "Talking heads," Tanya describes, "just come in out of nowhere and say, 'Hey, do this,' and then get swapped out again." She continues:

[There's a] constant stream of talking heads coming in to say, "This is the way you do it." . . . I was at a struggling school with 80% free and reduced lunch, 80% English as a second language, never passing, never making adequate yearly progress. We were just sick of somebody who knows better coming in and saying, "This is how you do it." You don't know our kids. You don't know what they're capable of. You don't know what we struggle with.

"Talking heads" becomes a very apt metaphor for someone disembodied who is disconnected from the body of knowledge a true teacher leader would have and be, and yet who claims to know teaching, learning, the particular spaces they enter, and the needs of the people they encounter there. Rose describes the discomfort she experiences when she confronts the possibility she could be seen as a talking head or know-it-all: "Sometimes I feel fraudulent. If someone says I'm on the edge of technology or that I'm the teacher leader of technology, then I'm like, 'Well, it wasn't that hard. I found this, this, and this.'" She squirms away from appearing to know

anything that someone else could not. Tanya wants to “stay away from those sage-on-the-stage kind of approaches, you know—the one person who knows it all and is just imparting wisdom that’s supposed to be helpful to other people. I don’t want to be on a pedestal.” Pedestals and talking heads create distance and detachment and do not inspire pedagogical wonder or action; whereas, teacher leadership is experienced as an intimate engagement with people and spaces that creates pedagogical moments.

The origin of the word “school” preserves this very sense, where pedagogy requires someone to effect “a holding back or a keeping clear,” so teaching and learning can occur (Harper, 2018). Teacher leaders “open spaces in which people feel invited to create communities of mutual support” (Palmer, 1998, p. 161). Talking heads “coming in from out of nowhere” (Tanya), and know-it-alls preach and dictate without embodying the lived knowledge teachers accumulate of particular places and students.

Many states, districts, and schools create roles and give teachers leadership titles. How do teacher leaders experience those titles? Are they evocative names that bring forth authentic aspects of teacher leadership? How do titles conceal and reveal lived experiences? The participants describe their experiences with titles in many ways:

Not that I ever think title gives much power to anything. I don’t like doing it necessarily for the title. (Chris)

I think that, sometimes, when we’re labeled “leader” we have all these loaded other things. People will say, “Well, you’re the team leader.” I remember [one teacher] who made comments like that, which are jokes, but they’re not really jokes. “Thought you were supposed to be some guru on technology,” and that kind of stuff. Just because I am a leader in one area does not make me perfect in all areas. (Rose)

The ones that the other teachers respect are the ones who come at it kind of sideways. Not like, “Oh, you have to do this because I said so, because I’m the department chair, or I’m the team leader. This is what we’re going to do.” They approach it more in a collegial way. The strongest teachers in my school don’t even have titles. (Dolly)

The title means nothing when we’re all sitting in my [class]room. (Rose)

Being told that you’re a teacher leader or that you’re going to be a leader of this—I really don’t like that. I think that sometimes the title sets other teachers off and turns them off. (Tanya)

In their experiences, titles obscure the participants’ vision of other teachers and other teachers’ view of them. Titles create a screen. Behind them could be a true being-as-teacher or an imposter. The title broadcasts, like a radio signal, some expectation of knowing-it-all that the teachers-as-leaders then have to work to overcome, ensuring the title recedes and their open orientation to pedagogical questions and needs based in a lived body of knowledge is foregrounded. A pedagogical stance (a posture that would be taken by a body of pedagogical knowledge) is a confident yet necessarily humble and vulnerable one in which the teacher or teacher-as-teacher-leader has to be simultaneously grounded in the wisdom of practice and open to others and new information. A pedagogical stance is experienced as an honest question or invitation; a title, on the other hand, can be experienced as a declarative announcement or assertion, a closure instead of an opening.

Examining a particular variation on the theme can uncover more aspects of the experience of a title. How do teacher leaders experience work formally titled as leadership that does not resonate with pedagogy? Dolly says, “There were a lot of times when I was officially a leader, but I didn’t always feel like one.” There were times in her role as department chair when she “had to say what they said even if

[she] didn't really, truly believe it" because the initiatives were affecting the students in ways the central office did not realize. Tanya conveys her frustration over a titled leadership role by drawing an image of how she thought she could help the school when she accepted the role and then aggressively crumbling it up (see Appendix F). She explains, "I feel like it's not what I signed up to do. I signed up to be a part of what direction our school is taking. And how can we be better teachers? How can we help our students better learn? Instead I'm saying, 'There's an assembly on Friday at 1:30.'"

Picking up on this tension, many studies point to the frustration teachers experience and the lost opportunities for school improvement that result from confusing administrative tasks with teacher leadership, often operationalized as instructional leadership in this context. What these studies do not fully evoke, however, is the detachment and disorientation teachers-as-teacher-leaders can experience when formal leadership titles and duties are not consonant with their orientation to the world as pedagogical bodies of knowledge. When the title feels like a mask it delays authentic connections with other teachers; the relationship between teacher and teacher leader depends upon clear lines of sight to the teacher leaders' body language.

Body Image and Being Weighed

Entering a situation as a "Teacher Leader" invites others to study that teacher, and he or she can feel all of those gazes. Here is one telling example of when a teacher experiences her body—and her body of knowledge—as the physical object of

other teachers' questioning ears and eyes. Tanya recounts her first day as an adjunct instructor:

My colleague talked me into teaching a graduate class in a certification program for teachers who want to be librarians. I had the master's degree and six years of experience as a school librarian, but I did not feel qualified in any way. The students in the class were all teachers with considerably more classroom experience than I had. The night of the first class arrived. I felt as prepared as I could be, but my palms were sweaty, my head hurt, and I am sure I was talking a mile a minute. I tried to stick to the script. We looked at the syllabus. We read the excerpts from the textbook. I explained the next assignment. Every time someone asked a question, I answered with, "Well, based on my experience . . ." And they listened. They took notes on what I was saying. Me. With my measly little six years of experience. I realized that my experience was good enough. These were teachers who knew how to teach in a classroom. They needed to know what it was like to teach in a library, and I was able to give them that information. I relaxed and settled into the class.

Tanya feels very corporeal symptoms of worry when she exposes her professional expertise to scrutiny. If "the body is always a place of vulnerability," according to Leder (1990, p. 98), then a person representing a professional body of knowledge is doubly vulnerable. Other professionals can see weaknesses that might be in Tanya's blind spots, and Tanya knows it. Tanya even signals her vulnerability to me at the start of the study by asking, "Are you sure I'm qualified?" Tanya does not want to be sized up, weighed, and found to be an imposter, a talking head without enough expertise to count as a teacher, let alone a teacher leader. When a teacher presents herself as a leader or master of any aspect of teaching to another teacher (or is presented that way by a situation, other person, or title), she presents her professional and physical body of knowledge to her colleagues for inspection.

A moment of professional judgment Ambereen, Michelle, Rose, and Tanya share is that they all submitted evidence of their classroom practice for evaluation by their peers and achieved National Board Certification. Ambereen sought judgment

because she wanted to be evaluated fairly, and they all wanted a challenge. Because Board certification is a peer-reviewed assessment based on performance, they experience it as a test of the authenticity of their pedagogical body of knowledge. The “NBCT” letters become part of Ambereen and her body of work; she feels valued by “other teacher leaders and other National Board Certified Teachers.” Rose says becoming an NBCT is the moment she began to see herself “as a leader.” “Since the National Board, I’ve tried to examine, why are we doing this?” For Rose and Michelle, the designation gives them confidence in their professional know-how that makes it somewhat easier to withstand moments of collegial scrutiny. On the other hand, Rose worries other teachers will interpret her NBCT letters as a transgression or judgment on their own professional worth if they are letter-less.

Reflecting on this moment of judgment when the authenticity of a being’s claim to be a teacher (let alone a teacher of other teachers) is in question, I am reminded of the ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead. When someone dies, their heart is weighed in a ceremony before they are allowed to travel to the Afterlife. The deceased declares he was innocent of wrongdoing in his life, and his heart is then weighed on a scale against a feather. If the heart is heavier, the person is judged unworthy. The heart was the center of thought and emotion to the Egyptians, so the totality of the person stands trial. If they passed, they were found to be true of voice and could transition to the Afterlife. If they failed the test, they would cease to exist. The stakes were all or nothing, and there was nowhere to hide.

Tanya’s heart is weighed in vulnerable moments when she, present in a situation as a teacher leader, tacitly declares herself to have something to share that is

worthwhile to another. Vulnerability, from the Latin for “wounding” (Harper, 2018), “is experienced as the self is faced with uncertainty. . . . The process of integrating knowing into being is one that evolves over time. Failure to meet one’s own or another’s expectations may leave one feeling inadequate and vulnerable” (Lashley, 1994, p. 42). Susceptible to pain, Tanya holds her breath in the moment of judgment just as I imagine ancient Egyptians thought they would: “I think I have been honest, but what if I have forgotten something? What if my judge knows me better than I know myself? What if the judge can see the moments of weakness I have tried to overlook?” Does Tanya wonder if her being-as-teacher will cease to exist if her students, principal, or teachers-as-students do not judge her to be true?

Another side of the coin is being sure in oneself as a teacher leader and then being misjudged. Ambereen shares her experiences during job interviews when her body and being are sized up and then dismissed because of the color of her skin, her religion, her gender or any combination thereof. Stafford (1977) captures a small piece of being misjudged in “Lit Instructor:” “I feel them shrug whenever I pause: / they class my voice among tentative things” (p. 77). Ambereen feels them shrug, glare, judge, and throw darts at the body through which she teaches every child in her care.

Rose imagines the judgment day she will face when she steps into a new role:

I didn't really want to be somebody who stood out in front of everybody as the leader, but I did want to enrich myself. I don't know that that makes me a leader, though. . . . I'm going to be a librarian now. Now I really am going to have to be this leader. I'm kind of worried about it. I'm going to be on stage. I'm on display, and if people think I'm not doing anything in here, they're going to judge me. So I'm going to have to do a really good job. Better than I've ever done.

Rose's transition will begin by seeking permission from her colleagues to cross the threshold into a new leadership role. They will weigh her body language, body of knowledge, and being as a teacher against the high expectations pedagogy has for her and expresses through them. What if they see something she has overlooked, forgotten, or is trying to hide? Despite the risks, Rose is called to do better than she has ever done in the past to extend her know-how into new territory.

Teacher Leaders Are Led by a Pedagogic Need

Upon returning from a break during one of the group conversations, Rose, Tanya, and Dolly wondered why they are called by those new territories and about what compels them to chase new horizons. Their conversation reminds me of the end of "Quatrains for a Calling" (Cole, 2013):

Why? *Are* you here?

What will you wear?
What will you do
if it turns out you've failed?
How will you fare?

Why are you here

when it could take years
to find out — what?
It's all so slippery,
and may not cohere.

And yet, you're here ...

Is it what you revere?

How deep does that go?
How do you know?
Do you think you're a seer?

Is that why you're here?

Do you have a good ear?
For praise or for verse?
Can you handle a curse?
Define persevere.

Why *are* you here?

It could be a career.

The three teachers asked themselves that very question: Why? Together, their exploration touches on the challenges, the possibilities, the vision, the perseverance, and the elusiveness—the slipperiness—of teacher leadership evoked in the poem:

Tanya: For the most part we all get the same salary as the teacher or librarian who comes in at contract hour and leaves at contract hour, so what is it that makes me or someone else want to be one of the sled dogs who leads the pack? What is it that makes me willing to say, “Okay. I’ll do this. I have a lot of other stuff going on, but I’ll do this.” Why are we all doing this?

Rose: It can’t be that you’re bored with your own life. It’s not that I’m bored so I have 100 extra hours to give to someone. We don’t have extra time. We don’t get compensated. We don’t necessarily get an award, reward, or kudos. Yet we are still the ones who step up.

Dolly: Is it because we see holes and we want to fill them?

Tanya’s sled dog metaphor and Dolly’s question start to answer the question, Why are you here? Fixing holes in the fabric of pedagogy is a time-intensive, laborious, energetically demanding job that cannot be done alone and can likely never be finished, and it is the calling of the authentic teacher or teacher leader. Their conversation makes me think of teachers filling holes in the ground with concrete for lasting improvements, putting down wooden planks just in time before a teacher or student stumbles or falls, building bridges over larger caverns to create paths that were not there before, deciding if some holes are better filled by those with different expertise, not noticing holes that are out of their field of sight but are visible to and repaired by other teachers, or noticing some holes that first appear dangerous are

actually wells that can sustain new life.

What is it like to be a seer or have a good ear, in Cole's words, for the call to serve teaching and learning? What is the experience of answering a call and filling that need, or of failing to meet it? What is it like to care for teachers and students and for pedagogy itself? Nel Noddings (2005) reminds us caring for an idea is a two-way exchange:

Caring for ideas and objects is different from caring for people and other living things. Strictly speaking, one cannot form a relation with mathematics or music.... But, oddly, people do report a form of responsiveness from ideas.... The mathematician Gauss was "seized" by mathematics. The poet Robert Frost insisted that "a poem finds its own way." (p. 20)

What is the relationship like between teachers and pedagogy when pedagogy calls?

How do they experience the caring exchange of call and answer when there is a hole to fill or a tear to mend?

The urgency is palpable in this description of an instant when a pedagogic need announces itself to a teacher in a faculty meeting:

As I was listening to the specialist hired by the district, I was thinking, "No, this isn't what we need to be doing. Our staff and students need something more specific." During the meeting, I kept looking over at the other grade level language arts teacher. We kept giving each other looks that meant, "Nope, there is a better way. We need something different. Our students need something else." (Dolly)

Dolly can no more ignore it than she can an urge to eat or sleep. It is immediately apparent to Dolly: If the school is going to support all teachers in learning the strategies they need so student literacy can improve, it cannot rely upon the resources the district is offering. Of all the teachers in the auditorium, Dolly recognizes they are being offered a mirage that dangerously lacks the sustenance they require. Of all the teachers in the auditorium, Dolly finds, wordlessly and motionlessly, a colleague who

also sees through it and shares Dolly's dedication to serving all of the teachers and students via this channel.

This pedagogic need places a demand on her that she cannot ignore. Dolly does not invent the need out of thin air; pedagogy singles her out to ensure this school has what it needs at this time. While other needs certainly grab other teachers at other times, in this time and place Dolly's body of felt need spurs into action. The need and her ability to meet the need are attracted to one another, like two magnets. The strength of that force also attracts other colleagues who can contribute. How do teachers experience the moment when that force of attraction announces itself?

Re-membering Pedagogy

In any given school system on any given day, countless pedagogic needs come into presence. At various times the participants in these conversations wonder why some of those needs adhered to them and others did not. While some studies note the effect that years of experience, interest, expertise, and other characteristics have on teacher leader development (Hunzicker, 2017; Smylie & Eckert, 2018), they leave me wondering with the participants about the lived experience of that differentiated magnetic pull.

The teachers engaging with me and teacher leadership in this study weave their pasts and their leadership decisions together, as when Chris explains, "That's what I've done. That's where I am." Chris is not tied down to his current situation by the weight of his past, though. Everything that leads to the body of knowledge he is now connects him to pedagogy's mobilizing call. Levin (1985) explains, "According to Heidegger, recollection is the 'repetition of a possibility of existence that has come

down to us.’ It is a retracing of steps in order to retrieve an understanding which will prepare us for new steps forward” (p. 72). Dolly, Chris, Rose, Ambereen, and Michelle remember their past as a forward-looking call to action. I choose to quote them all to honor their stories:

It was overwhelming for me in my first year of teaching. Someone would just hand me something and say, “Do this.” That’s not what I needed, because still the door closed, and I was left in that room by myself with students who at times I felt were smarter than I was. As a new teacher I didn’t know it was okay to not be the smartest person in the room at times. You’re trying to be the smartest person in the room, and you’re being challenged by students who are saying, “I want you to meet me where I am.” I didn’t have support and didn’t know the strategies or resources for that when I entered teaching. It became important for me to share that with teachers. (Michelle)

After working with those teachers as their mentor teacher and seeing how enthusiastic a lot of them were about teaching as an intern, I started looking at other teachers in the school and thinking where’s that enthusiasm? Where’s that passion? I started thinking about how it all works together. You have to keep teachers excited about teaching. If you keep them excited, kids will be excited about learning, and then their test scores will go up. We were approaching it from the wrong direction. We put a lot of pressure on the students, where they have to be accountable for test scores and tracking their own test scores. I remember when I was in elementary school or even high school, my teachers said, “Next week you’re going to have this test.” Okay. Then you did it and moved on. (Dolly)

I feel like I was one of those people that cannot understand the concept until you broke it down and showed me the exact structure from the bottom up. I feel like I missed a lot of stuff. I’ve always tried in my career to do that for people, whether it’s kids or teachers or anyone. There’s a drive in there to make people feel like it’s okay that you don’t understand. You can understand. You’re capable of it. Don’t give up, because I used to be where you are, and I didn’t understand. (Rose)

I didn’t get paid to help teachers with their National Board Certification. I just wanted to help because I know how scary it is. You spend all that money and you want to do a good job, and I wanted to be there to show people, “Look, you can get through it. I made it through. Anyone can make it if I made it.” (Rose)

I had ADHD horribly growing up. I was one of those kids that they would have loved to shuffle off somewhere, but I was also reasonably smart. If I was interested I could be very attentive, but if I didn’t like your rules, I did my own

thing. In the last school I taught in, if you weren't that typical kid everyone expects then it was, "we'll find a home for you somewhere else. Maybe on this other campus if we have a classroom or we'll make a program." That's what got me into the student services coordinator position. I knew inclusion could work and would work. . . . I tried to sell it to my principal and he was like, "No, I have to talk to my boss." So no. I went and got all these people—the university, teachers, community—on board so that he didn't need to go to his boss. I walked up to my principal, explained the plan, told him he'd look like a god in the district. "What do you say?" Okay, done. (Chris)

I want to get other teachers engaged, organize them. I want other teachers to feel what I have with the union and blogging. It has been so powerful. I want them to learn how to advocate for themselves. I want them to feel confident in what they're doing but also feel like they have a voice, and their voice is being heard, and our students are being heard. It started my first year of teaching. That was a bad year. I had the worst group of students in the building. One went straight to jail. No support. They threw a brand new teacher into a classroom with extremely low readers who had been used to teachers making them watch movies all day. That's not me. I want to teach, and we're actually going to read and write. I had support from one administrator who was really caring. She saw potential in me and helped me get through. I learned how to talk about, "These are the problems I'm having in class. I need support." She saw what was going on when the principal didn't care at all. Then is when I realized why I need to share stories from my own classroom. (Ambereen)

Their understandings of significant experiences in their past shape their futures, their bodies of knowledge, and how those bodies tune into to the world. Their "latent values of these events" (van Manen, 2015, p. 16) transform their sight and ear, allowing pedagogy to single them out for particular kinds of good work.

Stafford's (1977) "A Poet to a Novelist" might seem like a titular non sequitur, but he captures something important about how the past propels these teachers onward:

We take everything stacked, being all at once
like a jewel and then into some act; we pass calendar knots
through our hands, remembering not just important things—
maybe the welcome a Western town gave early women,
dust from the alley past the clothesline, anybody's sky
sighting down given streets, years like a fan opening
and then closing. We pay it out (still owing what's near us

every aid, no matter the worth, because it is near).

...

Over the night arc our need reaches for duty,
our state a glimmer to be good.

While the teachers tend to remember significant moments instead of every little moment (dust on ungraded papers, every student's name) as the poet and novelist do, the teachers, like the poet, seek duty that fulfills the promise of those memories. Remembering their professional past allows them to re-member their bodies of knowledge, keep themselves intact, and render every aid they can.

As centered, whole teachers, they expand outward serving ever growing circles of those who need them. They can “carry [themselves] toward a world” (Merleau-Ponty, 2014, p. 84) in which they recognize their past, and, rather than repeat it, they are prepared to “undergo an *original* experience of Being—an experience whose disclosiveness is somehow emancipatory” (Levin, 1985, p. 77). Chris, through his own past as a student and teacher, sees a colleague with a “really junk line” who is working with students who have ADHD and significant cognitive impairments in a classroom that used to be an office with no windows. Chris explains, “Between putting out fires with his students, training his staff, and processing all of this data, this teacher has no time to breathe. I have been working with him to help make some space, to develop routines and processes to address his team's needs.” He helps the students he could have been.

Ambereen draws on her long history of painful experiences as a minority teacher as motivation for her teacher leadership. She shares:

I am a minority, and I can speak to my experiences. My “I can't grow here. There's no way. There is no way. There is no possible way because of my ethnicity.” Those experiences informed my passions in the sense that I don't

want any educator to have an experience like that. When I talk to other minority educators, they don't even have to say much because I understand. I've been through and can assume what they're going through. They're not respected by administrators, them or their cultures. My stories are not unique.

Ambereen creates a fellowship among teachers who feel alone and silenced, providing the community she knows she needed and needs. Ambereen and Chris remember their professional bodies of knowledge by remembering all of the experiences those bodies have stored. Each of their actions as teachers who do what we are calling leadership “expresses who [they] are and who [they] have become as a result of past life experience” (van Manen, 2015, p. 209). Their pasts help provide the momentum and mobility that allow them to walk, or run, forward when pedagogy calls.

Claimed by Pedagogy: The Need Takes Hold

If it is true that “your job is to find what the world is trying to be” (Stafford, 1977, p. 107), how do teacher leaders go about that quest? Literary quests can provide some insight into what it means to be a teacher leader, a being called by pedagogy. *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* is a fourteenth century tale of a chivalric quest, a journey the hero/ine is compelled to complete by forces outside himself or herself and by inner resolve. Sir Gawain and the Green Knight make a compact: Gawain can attack the knight now, but if the knight survives, Gawain must find him in one year and subject himself to the same attack. The knight does survive (surprisingly, since his head is cut off), and so Gawain later sets off as promised:

A heze ernde and a hasty me hade fro þo wonez,
For I am sumned myselfe to sech to a place,
I ne wot in worlde whederwarde to wende hit to fynde. (Anonymous, 1993)

Loosely translated, Sir Gawain explains the power of the quest as “a high, hasty, pressing errand [that] had me from the dwelling, for I am summoned myself to such a place I know not in the world where to go to find it.”

Errands require us to leave the comfort of a dwelling that protects us, and they have clear ends and clarity of purpose; completion of an errand is rarely ambiguous even if the path is unclear, obscured, or arduous. Unlike everyday errands, a quest is elevated and presses upon the one who takes it up. Gawain’s quest is not optional. It “has” him. It summons him. It is noteworthy that Gawain is both summoned *by* this errand and summons himself *to* it. The quest comes from within and from without, or, in Heidegger’s (1962/2008) words, “The call comes from me and yet *from beyond me and over me*” (p. 320). The quest is a need in motion.

The questing nature of a need can also be found in its etymological roots, where *nied* is an errand, a compulsion, a duty. The Old English originally even means force or violence (Harper, 2018). While “need” today, and certainly in the context of teacher leadership, does not necessitate violence, it is in this all-consuming sense of a compulsion that teachers seek and meet the needs that announce themselves to those teachers. Teacher leaders are on quests that speak to them, reside within them, and compel them.

Pedagogy’s call. What is the experience like of the moment the quest announces itself and the call moves the teacher leader? Michelle recounts an incident that provides a glimpse into a moment when she feels compelled to spring into action on behalf of a new teacher. Michelle was a classroom teacher and the lead of the mentor program in the high school at the time this happened. It is a particularly

intense encounter, which serves to continue our inquiry into what it is like for teachers to experience the kind of compulsion that seeks the fulfillment of a pedagogical need.

Then one day during lunch a teacher came to me—during class—and said that this new teacher was crying because her mentor accused her, in front of students, of going behind her back to tell on her. I said, “What?” I was out the door. I got someone to watch my class, and I left to find the new teacher. I think she was crying in the bathroom. I talked to the principal and met with the mentor teacher, and I lost it. Not all at the same time, I can’t even remember when in the day or what order that happened. But I remember that she made a new teacher cry. The mama bear came out because she made a new teacher cry when we’re supposed to support her. I don’t care what the new teacher is doing. You give her that support.

There are many questions we could ask about this incident, about the rightness or wrongness of individual actions and practices and of the systems that made the rightness or wrongness more or less likely. Those questions are salient, but for the sake of this phenomenological inquiry it is the intensity with which Michelle springs into action that demands attention. Hearing this teacher in her care is wounded, Michelle’s reaction is twofold: “What?” and then she “was out the door.” Her body understands; her brain needs more time. We often say decisions are out of our hands. In this case the decision is in her hands, her legs, her feet; the pedagogical imperative to take care of new teachers is in charge.

This imperative is outside and inside simultaneously. It pulls Michelle out of her classroom. It even pulls her out of time. Michelle has no sense of what order things happen or even that the order matters to this experience. It also compels her from within. Like Gawain, Michelle is summoned herself. In this sense, Michelle is possessed by the need to attend to this new teacher. Possession implies ownership, something dwelling within something else. Etymologically “possession” comes from

the Latin *possidere*, meaning “to have and hold” (Harper, 2018). This duality of internally having while externally holding tells us something about the experience of being compelled by a need, or of “being on one’s own mission,” as Chris names it. Needs summon teachers twice over, from the commitment within and from the situation or person without—*without* in the double sense that this situation or person is outside or surrounds the teacher and is lacking something.

An authentic call or need can come from within the teacher or without, but teacher leaders are on pedagogical quests that speak to them, reside within them, and compel their bodies of knowledge (those that are comprised of their past learnings). This movement forward is what Levin (1985) calls motility:

Our motility constitutes a body of genuine understanding, and . . . this motility-body enables us to *feel* our inherence in the field of Being as a whole. I submit that the claim calls to us *through* our motility, and that motility *opens* us to *feeling* the initial claim and *being moved* by our sense of its significance. (p. 103)

The call can be detected in the action it elicits, and teacher leaders are made ready for that action by the motility of their pedagogical bodies. In Tanya’s words, “Over time you’re looking for things to help you feel like you’re getting somewhere with that purpose.”

Michelle recognizes the call when a principal suggests she become an assistant principal even though she “wasn’t looking in that direction.” Earlier in her career, she answers a call to help her colleagues when she sees teachers in her department cannot even get access to resources the school owns. She becomes department chair to have the authority to organize the storage room and ensure equitable access to teaching materials. Tanya responds when a particular close

colleague urges her to present at conferences, and Dolly recognizes a chance to support new teachers when the school coordinator asks her if she wants an intern. Dolly is called by making her school a positive, exciting place to learn and grow for everyone there. She recognizes an opportunity while reading the county newsletter that leads to the custodial staff winning an award. Dolly notices how the school who employs her intern upon graduation welcomes her, and starts wondering how her own school could make new teachers feel at home before even their first day. She reinvigorates the school's Twitter account and overhauls the newsletter to show "the positive things students are doing as well as the staff to build more of a sense of pride and respect."

Once that call is felt by teacher leaders, how do they decide when and how to answer? Sometimes, as with Michelle, the decision seems to exist at the same time the call is felt. At other times, the call opens a moment of contemplation. Or, sometimes, the call itself is the moment when pedagogical purpose clicks into place, as is the case with Ambereen:

I didn't realize I was a teacher leader until a year and a half ago when I was an ambassador and I had to write my story of self. That was when it clicked. I was a teacher leader but before then, but I never actually acknowledged in real life. I thought I was just a teacher talking to people. I didn't fully understand that I'm advocating for my students, sharing my stories. My stories have a purpose. It's to create change.

Regardless of how the call and response unfolds in time, the call asks teachers to confront who they are in the face of pedagogy.

The call is a decision point. Levin (1985) explains what kind:

Our decision *is* how we live: how we are moved to comport ourselves, how we bear witness to that which has moved us, the kind of stand we take, and the various postures and positions by which we continually manifest what we

have understood of the attunement. The calling, a bodily felt sense of the true nature of our motility as a dynamic mode of being-in-the-world, calls us into the region of existential struggle and decision. (p. 103)

Noticing the call means the teacher must decide who he or she is in the face of it. It also means others will be able to read those decisions in the teachers-as-teacher-leaders' body language, i.e., their "postures and positions." Calls are invitations to action and also act as mediated re-introductions between teacher colleagues; after the call, the teacher leader is who he was before plus his response to the call. How do teacher leaders experience calls they decide to answer, those that make them go, "boom, I'll jump and I'll do it" (Tanya)? What stands do they take and what is that attunement like for them? Rose describes what it means to realize she has a body of knowledge within her that compels her to act: "I have it. Now I have to live it."

Imposter call. If there are calls teachers experience as calls to their higher pedagogical selves, what is it like to experience requests that pretend to be authentic calls? Dolly opens this space by sharing that when she was department chair, "I felt like the administration had one view about what my teacher leadership should be and I had a different view of what it should be" and that "there were a lot of times when I was officially a leader but I didn't always feel like one." She evokes what these moments were like by creating a sculpture with "a weight that's tying you down, and the balloon is lifting you up and going in a totally different direction" (see Appendix G). Paper clips splinter in multiple directions, and while they do not puncture the balloon, they are precariously close. The balloon survives, however, and can lift her

towards her call to make her school more positive. Rose's artifact is an open book (see Appendix H), but she is prepared to close it to protect herself:

When admin asks us to be leaders, they put us in an already antagonistic situation. They want us to convey information that they are actually supposed to convey. They're delegating it to other people and letting them be leaders, but at the end of the day it's not always meaningful. I hate when that happens.

Rose will do the job and project a version of herself as a leader to satisfy her boss, but her true self hides, waiting for chances to satisfy a call she recognizes as coming from a pedagogical place.

Ambereen similarly describes being asked to lead a staff development session under the guise of teacher leadership when it does not feel like true teaching of teachers at all. Just as Dolly feels punctured and pulled in two different directions and Rose feels closed, Ambereen feels "pushed on." She shares:

Our staff development teacher knows I use this one platform for online collaboration. She asked me if I could give a session on it and train other teachers. I think it was supposed to be, "Here's an opportunity for you to show off your skills to the building," but it came off as less work for her and more work for me. . . . It took me hours and hours to put together to make sure it was really useful for teachers. I felt resentful, because I didn't learn anything from it. It really truly was not an opportunity for me to learn. It was forced upon me in a way like I had to do it. I go for other meetings outside the building. I do work with our union. I don't want to say no, because I felt like I didn't really have a choice. It would have looked bad on me. In the future if I want to do something, I need my principal to want to help me. I really felt like it was pushed on me. I had to give this presentation twice.

This experience does not nourish Ambereen's body of knowledge. Remarkably, she uses the language of a hostage situation, in which she does the work in exchange for being able to answer pedagogy's call freely at a later time. Also remarkably, she still makes sure the teachers in the session have a polished session with student work, examples of class presentations, and resources they can access later. By textbook or

research or technical definition she exercises instructional leadership (Wenner & Campbell, 2016), and yet she does not recognize or experience it as such. Typically we would ask in response, How we can craft programs to nudge (push?) teachers like Ambereen into seeing that what she did truly was teacher leadership? What new possibilities emerge for teachers if we ask instead, How can our definitions and the programs based on them listen to and then change to make room for Ambereen's experience with the staff developer, the time she had to spend, and how much it cost?

These requests are experienced as imposters that impose themselves on the teacher (Harper, 2018). The requests present themselves as opportunities for true teacher leadership, but pull teachers into modes of distance and indifference instead of nearness and caring. They masquerade as pedagogy's call. I find myself wondering how understanding teachers' experiences of leadership can awaken a sense that helps those around teachers, and teachers themselves, to recognize, name, and tell the difference. Mislabeling can have consequences for teachers who, as beings making their way in the world, use names like "teacher leadership" as guideposts. A true name is emancipatory, as with Ambereen when she has her revelation that the act of telling her story as a minority teacher is transformative leadership. Imposter calls chafe, and true calls resonate.

In Pedagogy's Service: Services Unfulfilled and Services Rendered

Once a teacher hears pedagogy's call and sets about "filling the hole" in front of her (Dolly), what is it like to continue in that work and then recognize when pedagogy's needs (via a fellow teacher, students, policy, etc.) are met? Is it similar to

how the speaker in the poem “In the Museum” sparks learning that changes a worldview over and over again (Stafford, 1977)?

Like that, I put the next thing in your hand—
this piece of rock the farthest climbers found,
or this, a broken urn volcano-finished.

Later you’ll walk out and say, “Where’s home?”
There will be something lacking in each room,
a part you held and casually laid down.

You never can get back, but there’ll be other
talismans. You have learned to falter
in this good way: stand still, walk on, remember—

Let one by one things come alive like fish
and swim away into their future waves. (p. 92)

Pedagogy announces itself as possibilities and as questions that allow teachers and students both to be taken care of, grow, and learn. What is it like when teacher leaders, as beings who are led by pedagogy and seek its fulfillment, let people come alive like fish who can now swim into the future? What is it like when teacher leaders cannot reach others to get that rock or urn into their hands? Or when they reach, but the other walks out and moves on like nothing happened at all?

Crumpled visions. Tanya describes a time when she has a vision of pedagogical possibilities that call to her, a clear opportunity opens, and then it does not come to fruition. Her word choice announces the opposition and even betrayal she feels:

I volunteered to be the team lead because I think the librarian has an important role in the instructional direction of the school. I am a very big picture person, but I feel like that has been squashed. I shouldn’t say squashed. It hasn’t happened that way, and I feel very frustrated. . . . This year was just way too rough. I feel like I was a bit baited and switched. You know, “Come do all these wonderful things, work for us, start this program! But wait! You can’t do anything you want to do.” As a brand new school, I had hoped there would

be lots of opportunity to come up with new ideas for my programs. To really establish, to lay a good foundation and get people involved. I get told, “No, we’re not going in that direction.”

Her spirit and body of knowledge are “squashed” with no space to maneuver.

Furthermore, she is tricked into thinking this role can allow her to fulfill her calling to support the school. She is promised one deal but gets stuck with another. Just as she starts to move forward, immovable objects are dropped in her path.

Beyond words, Tanya attempts to convey her frustration by drawing her vision and then crumpling it up in front of us during a group conversation (see Appendix F). Dolly and Rose ask her to say more about the frustration when they are visibly shaken by the angry gesture coming from someone who had been so cheerful and friendly. She tries:

I don’t know where my frustration comes from. I don’t know if it comes from lack of communication, if it comes from my disappointment in not having the job I thought I would be doing, if it comes from [another teacher] being bogged down in details, if it comes from me not being able to get them for her, or me not really caring what time the assembly ends. Or maybe I’m frustrated because I wanted to help guide the school instructionally, and yet I spend most of my leadership time dealing with trivial details that have nothing to do with what I teach, how I teach, or how students can learn better. It is very easy for me to crumble this paper and say, “I’m frustrated.”

Tanya also shares that the hope of taking on team lead was compounded by her hope in going to that school in the first place. She thought she would be able to work in a school that was less bogged down by a focus on standardized testing, and so teachers would be more free to collaborate with her on extended and deep units of study.

Instead the requirement of common lessons for all teachers means “you either get the

whole grade level to buy in [to an enriched lesson in the library] or you don't do it at all."

Etymology uncovers aspects of Tanya's frustration. "Frustrate" comes from the Latin *frustrari*, which means "to deceive, disappoint, make vain" (Harper, 2018). Disappointment ushers in sadness, and working in vain ushers in uselessness. Being led by a pedagogical need and being guided by a clear call to enhance instruction invite Tanya into an orientation towards the world in which she feels useful, noticing the positive impacts of her efforts. Her calling to enhance instruction in a school remains, but in this case it resides with the realization that in that place, at that time, she is let down into one of the very holes she is trying to fill. Falling away from an authentic mode of being in tune with pedagogy, she longs to reclaim a genuine kind of being-with-others in which it can thrive.

Phenomenological studies of nursing also notice the toll it can take to persist toward a call to care. For example, Emily Slunt (1994) foregrounds the tension between possible liberation and felt constraints:

I believe that authenticity means an awareness of care as the foundation of our ethical existence. It calls for a continued struggle to be free. A struggle for freedom means a struggle to be able to reach the patient, to embrace another being with genuine concern. Freedom means reaching beyond the boundaries of the social structure where we often find a resistance to care. It means releasing self from indifference and distancing, a posture often found to exist in an administered bureaucratized society. It means finding real meaning in relationships with another, caring deeply, and affirming caring as a foundation for responsible existence. (p. 59)

At the time of the conversations for this study, Tanya is still at the school she describes, engaging in the struggle to cling to an embrace of pedagogical care and concern despite the resistance. Unable to reach her colleagues and students, she

decides to change schools. She convinces a long-time colleague to join her so they can establish a new library program for this next school together. Her pedagogical body is still healthy enough to move itself toward the sound of the needs she can meet. We might also wonder if experiencing this discomfort and the keen awareness of what it lacks opens Tanya for a deeper experience with genuine pedagogical care.

Nods and ripples. It is not all frustration and disappointment. With those potential lows comes the elation of fulfilling pedagogy's high expectations. Teacher leaders recognize when teachers give them the nod, a gesture of professional recognition that care was received and that teaching and learning are the better for it. Chris recalls the time he gave a mandatory staff development session with a reputation for wasting everyone's time. In his hands, it clicks: "Oh my god. I had so much fun. For the rest of my time there people talked about it. 'Thank you. It finally made sense.' It was so good." Chris bounces in his seat as he tells me about it. He can barely keep still. He continues on about his experience of this particular leadership role:

I liked the control of it. I really did. I had a lot of ideas on how we could do things better. I could say, "Okay. There's a problem. Cool. Let's do something. We're doing something." That's what I like about it. That's what catches me. It's the same thing in a classroom. I just get to do it on a bigger scale.

His excitement while talking is as palpable as the momentum in the experience he describes. There's a drive to move from idea, to gathering in a shared orientation, to action. He is not the source of the momentum, although he is a catalyst for those around him. He gives credit for this spark of activity to his pedagogical calling to take some action that addresses a problem. Pedagogy "catches him," and in so doing the

principles of pedagogy—the caring relation inherent in genuine teaching and learning among teachers and students—nudge him forward. Nods from his colleagues in the form of feedback and nods from the situation in the form of change make him vibrate with usefulness, purposefulness, and fullness of being.

How do teacher leaders experience fulfillment if their efforts do not directly impact those around them? Where do they look for telltale nods that would disclose a place where pedagogy bloomed? Tanya imagines a ripple effect for her work on the state committee that selects books for a prominent reading list:

Being on the committee helps me select current materials for my library, and because I've already read the books, it puts me in a better position to recommend books to my students. I also like knowing that my work on the committee has had an impact on the entire state.

Projecting her own experiences with the reading list and on the committee, she sees all the librarians, children, and families who will now encounter these books and be helped in some way. She does not have hard proof, but she “takes it on faith” (Tanya) the ripples will continue outward.

Sometimes teacher leaders are able to see more directly the long-lasting impact of the relationships they form and the work they do in pedagogy's name.

Ambereen recalls a time when she feels like a leader even though the receivers of her action are faceless and distant. She was part of a group of teachers that I convened for the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards to analyze video and written commentary of National Board Certified Teachers and “tag” them to identify examples of the Common Core State Standards. These cases were going to be made available in an online library called ATLAS. Ambereen shares her experience of that gathering:

I recently went to ATLAS, and I was like, “Wow.” I think I saw a video in there that I tagged. There is this whole other audience that’s going to see this, and it’s going to impact them in some way. Maybe a new teacher will learn a strategy and apply it to their kids. That was really powerful. I had a small role, but my role combined with hundreds of others to make the finished product.

Ambereen, like Tanya, imagines those whom the ripples will touch, and she also imagines the larger group of teachers who worked together to create ATLAS. Her community of care transcends the project’s years and many locations across the country. It is no less keenly felt for its dispersion.

Ambereen then surprises me by granting me the gift of a nod of recognition for my own efforts to nurture pedagogy. At the time I facilitated this ATLAS group, I was grappling with whether or not I still counted as a teacher or teacher leader because I worked with the National Board and not in a classroom. At least two years had elapsed between the tagging session and this conversation between me and Ambereen. She shows me the ripples:

I’ve been in touch with a couple of the teachers, and we still talk about it. It was a really powerful dialogue that we had. Other taggers I imagine had similar experiences. I don’t want to close that. We’re in it together. It’s that feeling. We’re not in isolation. It’s exciting, because now [in my new role] I can get other teachers to have these kinds of opportunities. Oh, I finally get it. I get why you’re doing this, Kristin. I admire the way you handled the tagging, and the way you talked to us, and how you really respect teachers, and your passion. Thank you so much for working with me. It’s one of the best experiences I’ve had in my teaching profession. Those moments and the conversations in the room, I remember them vividly.

In the moment Ambereen shared with me and even now as I write about it, I am invited to come face-to-face with the authentic connections rooted in care and pedagogy that I help to nurture. I am not employed as a teacher, and the common phrases available to me in my field tell me “I left the classroom” and “left teaching.” But here before me is a teacher giving me the nod. Sending examples of teaching, that

were vetted by teachers, into the world for new teachers to learn from helps to build a profession; convening teachers to unpack those examples in their own language and based on the wisdom of their own practice is a way for me to honor their expertise and being-as-teachers. Like most teachers, I feel uncomfortable taking credit for something (especially in print), but I am going to persist. The reason is that Ambereen reminds me that the ripples and nods are dependent on the interconnectedness of being—in pedagogy and in life. If I try to extract myself from the group who had these experiences, I do more to close it than to keep it open. In reality, Ambereen and I are intertwined; the ripples we sent out overlap and amplify each other for a lasting impact. I thank Ambereen for the nod, for bringing my own ripples into view, and for the gift of being able to see myself as a teacher-as-teacher-leader in the present tense.

Chris and Michelle also find themselves reflecting on lasting impacts they create. In so doing I wonder if they find a piece of their pedagogical selves as I just did. Let us start with Chris:

Now [this school] is a state example for inclusion. They still do it. It started because they would put a kid who's got ADHD in a room full of kids with behavioral disorders. Now you've got a crazy impulsive kid with a behavior disorder. And you've got a bunch of nonverbal autistic kids who are banging their heads on the walls. Our goal was to fix that. . . . It worked, and now it's way bigger. We were the first school in the state to do an Inclusion First set up. Not inclusion only—it's a mentality not a placement system. Start out assuming the kid can be in gen. ed. If it's doable we do it. If it's not then we start looking at other options. . . I'm super proud of that. I liked it. It made me feel nice. It was the right thing to do.

Chris can still see himself in that school with that program. The teachers who enact it now are across the country, and he physically travelled away from them years ago.

Yet he uses present tense and “we.” Pedagogical togetherness and ripples of positive effect born of teacher leadership move outside of time and location.

Michelle has been an assistant principal for one year at the time of our conversations, previously serving as the department chair of a new school for several years. She is proud of the camaraderie she nurtured and that still continues in her absence. Michelle says with a wide, slow smile:

Of all the things I've done, that was one of the best things, because that English department is the best of that entire school. They're encouraging to one another. They share everything. They're confident. They still eat together on Fridays. I hardly ever get complaints from parents about that department. That's my proudest thing I've ever done.

Neither Chris nor Michelle is there now, and yet their presence lingers and their sense of responsibility for pedagogy's wellbeing within those communities persists. Ripples and nods are quiet celebrations of pedagogical care given and received.

In Pedagogical Limbo: Seeking the Next Port of Call

Once a need is met or a need is noticed but cannot be fulfilled, how do teachers find their way through the transition period to the next opportunity to answer the call to nurture pedagogy? How does the call "reach him who wants to be brought back" (Heidegger, 1962/2008, p. 316)? McGrane (1942) invites us to consider what transitions can be like:

Fashioned for some encounter
Impelling but obscure,
Apprenticed to the future,
We wonder and endure.

We suffer strange compulsion.
Our talents, many skilled,
Would burn upon an altar
We have not wit to build. (p. 259)

Granted, the challenge for teacher leaders seems less about having the wherewithal and knowledge to build the altar at which they can practice their teacher leadership,

and more about finding the space to be able to expand fully into pedagogy and the leadership it asks of them. With that said, Rose absolutely endures even though she is not always sure of what her next encounter will be. Speaking in the language of the representation she created of her own teacher leadership (see Appendix H), Rose shares how those transitions announce themselves to her: “As long as I can function and reach out and feel success, I will continue. But, if I feel that things are out of my hands, or somebody keeps shutting the door and I can't open it, I will take my tree and plant it in someone else's yard.” Seeking the usefulness and purpose that await her, she will search for places, people, or situations that provide nutrients for her own teaching and support of fellow beings-in-pedagogy. Heidegger (1962/2008) might offer that the calling to move that she experiences is her pedagogical conscience urging her not to fall into the mode of Being marked by disconnectedness, clichés, and feeling lost:

Conscience manifests itself as the call of care: the caller is Dasein, which . . . is anxious about its potentiality-for-Being. The one to whom the appeal is made is this very same Dasein, summoned to its ownmost potentiality-for-Being. Dasein is falling into the ‘they,’ and it is summoned out of this falling by the appeal. (p. 322)

She will search for a way to reassemble her body of knowledge, making sure she can take pedagogy back into her hands.

Fellow participants also reflect on transitions. Chris names the call to transition to the next horizon of leadership as “urges to move” and then explains, “I end up where I need to be.” He feels those urges when he gets “bored” after he finishes a challenge. He opens transitions with a question: “What’s the next one?” Rose also notices the dawn of a transition period when she is “bored” and asks,

“What’s the next project?” A transition for her is a “drive to the next challenge.” She calls it “my itch.” Dolly looks for moments to say yes. Tanya makes changes when she “wasn’t using [her] brain enough.” They become restless and unsettled in the space between clear callings, and Ambereen, like Rose, moves when “there wasn’t opportunity.”

Curiously, opportunity has etymological roots in a Latin phrase *ob portum veniens*, “coming toward a port” (Harper, 2018). Teacher leaders in transition sail towards their next place or situation where pedagogy can take hold of them, and they can settle in to the needs that call them. Harkening to the representations she, Dolly, and Rose make (see Appendices E-G), Tanya explains:

They gravitate towards those people [who engage with them] because you don’t want to be weighed down. You don’t want to be crumpled up. You don’t want to have all these paperclips going. You don’t want the book to be shut. You find those people who are going to help you grow, who are going to listen to you.

They seek their next port of call. They hope for enough shelter to fulfill their purpose.

They hope for this shelter, because transitions are places of vulnerability.

Tanya, in between schools, is “worried that I’m running out of space. I’m worried that going to a middle school isn’t going to fix it. That’s what happened when I went to high school. I went, ‘hold on.’ I went back to elementary. Now I feel like going to middle school is just asking to run out of space again.” Yet, she is apprenticed to that future middle school, planning for it excitedly, and compelled by the chance to use her skills and talents for the good of the school. The port represents a place where teachers-as-teacher-leaders can reawaken themselves to their being-as-teachers and find their center:

A Being centered receives ongoing nourishment and energy to continue to strengthen self and reach out to community. Centering can be described as a returning home, a sense of place to come back to, finding comfort in renewed self-awareness, and in hearing a call for response to greater human need beyond oneself. . . . Centeredness implies growth. [It is a] process of growing, of ascending and becoming more. (Lashley, Neal, & Slunt, 1994, p. 203)

In the calm of safe harbor, they can hear again any calls that became too quiet or drowned out by noise. It is from this center that they can nurture pedagogy in themselves and others and become more and more who they are as teachers.

Unbeknownst to me at the time of participant selection, three of the teachers—Tanya, Rose, and Ambereen—were in transition periods at the time of our conversations. While not all transitions are characterized by changing schools or formal roles (Dolly, for example, continually hears new calls while remaining in her same classroom), all three were making such a change. Tanya was moving from elementary to middle school; Rose, from teaching social studies to being the school librarian; Ambereen, from teaching to working full-time in a union role with no plans to return to the classroom. The vulnerability surfaces, and I can also see the hope of finding a place to answer the call that speaks to them. Tanya was looking to learn about herself and how she approaches nurturing pedagogy in a new environment.

Curious about expanding her own body of knowledge, she says:

I'm interested to see what that's going to be like for me next year having a lot of experience, but not a ton at a middle school in this county, and working with somebody who has been doing that for a couple of years. It'll be interesting to see if I can jump into leadership or if I need to back off and say, "Okay, what now?" I don't want to be the person with the answers all the time. I don't expect I will be. I imagine that gets old.

Her drive to learn propels her into and through her transition.

Rose has a vision of impacting the teaching and learning in the school and community from the library, the center of the school that she hopes can help her regain her own center. She admits being a bit lost on the back side of the transition:

I just need a break from the classroom. This way [in the library] I can still be me and also take a break. I'm burnt out bad. In the library I could go 1 of 2 ways. Easy road, not do anything and not be a leader and never reach potential. I'm not that kind of person. I'm going to try to be a good leader. I'm a teacher at heart. My goal is to get the kids interested in school, learning, and do something to shake it up a little bit. I want to have an impact on the community. I want to have an impact on the school. I can reach more students through the library. I feel like I have a purpose.

She knows in her core who she is, that she is a teacher, that being in pedagogy means she must remain in touch with her and others' potential. Burned out to teaching students social studies, she is unable to connect with that potential in the classroom at the moment. She may very well heal the same way a burned tongue, with time, can taste again, but in the meantime, she will put herself where she can feel and live her purpose.

These transitions can take teachers even farther from the classroom. How do teachers-as-teacher-leaders experience the drive to follow a need away from directly teaching students? Michelle, for example, follows the needs she notices and pedagogy's call to her front office as an assistant principal. Ambereen faces into that transition:

I started giving away a lot of things from my classroom. I'm not going back. This is it. This is the next step. I had to struggle with that. I love teaching, but I see this now is my path. This is what I really want to do, and I can impact more students. It seems so surreal. But I've already started some of the new work, and it's all the ideas we've been talking about for the last two years. We're going to take those ideas and really apply them. There's so much potential. I might struggle in August when everyone goes back, but I really do still feel like a teacher.

Grappling with distance from the classroom, Ambereen is unequivocally called by the pedagogical purpose of helping other teachers find their purposes. She follows her call to help teachers find their voices and have opportunities, and her yellow brick road takes her to a role outside the classroom. She, like Rose, is still a “teacher at heart,” called to nurture pedagogy. Her teacher vision and ear for teaching and learning open her to seeing this role, this port of call, as a place of possibility and potential. The undercurrent of uncertainty is unmistakable, though. I recognize my own struggles to come to terms with leaving the classroom, and it is the same worry that teachers across the country have shared with me in private conversations. How does one experience such a transition when the teacher making the journey still feels like a teacher, but in one harbor they get one name and then in the next they have to change their name?

Transitions are saturated with possibility. Irene Stewart (1927) evokes the vulnerability and hope of teachers moving towards new horizons where pedagogy can thrive in and through their helping hands. She explains on their behalf:

We are not lost to darkness yet—
There is a sea-green glow that’s West,
A dim mauve flush that’s East, and set
Between, this purple hill of rest. (p. 244)

As soon as, and as long as, they can see the next hole to fill, their quests will continue.

Teacher Leaders Have a “Guardian Awareness” of Pedagogy

“Sensing is this living communication with the world,” Merleau-Ponty (2014) writes, which prompts the question: What is a teacher leader’s sense of a situation, or,

more specifically, a teacher leader's sense of pedagogy in a situation? What kind of awareness guides them through the territories and transitions they navigate?

Teacher Sense

“Pedagogy is that more elusive and invisible dimension that lies at the heart of teaching and all other childcare practices” (van Manen, 2015, p. 23), and if pedagogy can be elusive, it stands to reason that understanding how teachers identify other teachers who have a similar pedagogical sensitivity might be elusive. Tanya questions and describes such a moment of recognition:

How do we find those people? My friend Jane and I call it the greatest day in library friendship when she's sitting next to this other librarian at our library meeting, and she's like, "This guy does not know anything. He is not my kind of person." She came and sat by me, and we've been best friends forever. I think you gravitate towards those people because you don't want to be weighed down.

Just as gravity hums quietly in the background of our physical world, there is some kind of sense operating through Jane and Tanya that perceives a similar orientation toward teaching and learning.

Starting from the senses teachers have available to them in the classroom might offer a way into language that can describe what it is like to sense opportunities for pedagogy as a teacher leader. Van Manen (2015) names the general sense one can have of others as “people-sense.” Those of us with people-sense are good judges of character and can read people quickly. He uses “child-sense” to refer to “the pedagogical sense (sensitivity) of perceptive insights into the child's world, being, experiences, and emotions. The practice of pedagogy relies on child-sense” (p. 77). He goes on to explain that teachers' pedagogical interactions with children require a complex, professional knowledge base and other forms of thoughtfulness.

Expanding on that notion, I offer the term “teacher sense” to refer to the pedagogical sense teacher leaders have of insights into a teacher’s world, being, experiences, and emotions. Van Manen asserts, in a way that would resonate with any educator or parent, a teacher without child-sense is no teacher at all; teacher leaders, then, are those teachers whose child-sense abilities have expanded to include teacher sense. Can it be said that a guardian of pedagogy without teacher and child sense is no teacher leader at all? Perceptive insights into both children’s and teachers’ worlds open new fields of vision for teacher leaders, a “new dimension of experience” (p. 32) in Merleau-Ponty’s (2014) words. They perceive and attend to pedagogy as a dimension of Being that is enacted by and through teachers and students both.

Teacher sense offers a way of talking about the sense-abilities teacher leaders have, but the way teacher leaders see and feel the world around them still feels elusive. Tanya likens teacher leadership to geese flying in formation, appropriately enough a phenomenon scientists are still trying to understand. Tanya is struck by how the geese sense each other and their location. She explains they fly in a ‘V’ to reduce drag on the others and enable the group to fly farther, and as the goose in the front tires, it falls back and another takes the lead spot. Scientists are not entirely sure how geese know when to migrate and how to get there, and they also learned geese sense the air flow so precisely that they will move their wings in sync with all the others in the formation. Geese have air flow, landmarks, magnetic fields, energy level of the lead goose, and other to-be-determined guides for their sense of each other, when to take the lead, and where they are in the world. The language of teacher leadership does not yet have names for what guides teacher leaders’ teacher sense: “A pathic

language is needed in order to evoke and reflect on pathic meanings. Pathic understanding requires a language that is sensitive to the experiential, moral, emotional, and personal dimensions of professional life” (van Manen, 2015, p. 213). How do teacher leaders experience what it is like to develop the pathic understandings that make up teacher sense and to open themselves to other teachers and where they all are in the world in relation to the needs of pedagogy? How do they experience nameless dimensions of their professional lives?

Levin (1985) provides another way into finding language for the teacher sense Tanya experiences. He names it a “guardian awareness,” which becomes activated from dormancy by calls to compassionate care:

To move with compassion is to move *in response* to the calling—the sufferings and needs—of other sentient beings. But when deep compassion is the motivation, to move and to *be* moved are one and the same. . . . It is through movements taking place in the openness of compassion that Being first touches us and moves us to sense its still deeper, and much more mysterious, claims on our guardian awareness. (p. 98)

The origins of the word “guardian” show the lived meaning of being this kind of protector. The meaning touches not only on keeping watch and protecting, but also on perceiving and sensing (Harper, 2018). Phrases today attempt to capture the guardian awareness that requires alert attunement and the instinct to preserve: I look over my shoulder, have eyes in the back of my head, or feel it in my gut. True teachers who expand into what-is-called-teacher-leadership have already opened themselves to the “pedagogical sensitivity . . . sustained by a certain kind of seeing, listening, and responding to a particular child or group of children in ever-changing situations” (van Manen, 2015, p. 35). Their bodies of knowledge become more and more perceptive, and they grow into their teacher sense. Phenomenologically speaking, teacher

leadership is the call to nurture pedagogy itself and to have compassion for teachers who exist in pedagogy as much as for the students. It is the attunement to their shared pedagogical world. What does it mean to be a guardian of Being as it announces itself in pedagogical interactions, moments, and intangible possibilities? What recedes and what comes into focus for teacher leaders in those moments when pedagogy might need a guardian?

Tuning In

How *do* teacher leaders experience opening themselves to other teachers and where they all are in the world in relation to the needs of pedagogy? Levin (1985) engages with that question by sharing Medard Boss's thoughts on attunement:

Every attunement *as* attunement is a particular mode of the perceptive openness of our existence. . . . What we call moods, feelings, affects, emotions, and states are the concrete modes in which the possibilities for being open are fulfilled. They are at the same time the modes in which this perceptive openness can be narrowed, distorted, or closed off. (p. 110)

Teacher sense, then, would allow a teacher leader to attend to those very modes in herself and the teachers in her care. As a new assistant principal, Michelle resonates with language of perceptive openness: "I try to stay in tune to the concerns of teachers and how moving them beyond a certain thinking could inspire students to succeed." It requires effort on her part to dwell in the modes that amplify her teacher sense, but that sense proactively protects pedagogy as a way of being that announces possibilities to teachers and students both.

The effort to keep the space open for pedagogy meets more or less resistance depending on the situation. Rose is not looking forward to leading from the library where she will have to greet everyone with a smile and collaborate whether they are

excited, inviting, rude, prickly, or stand-offish. On the other hand, pedagogy and friendship seem to thrive with very little effort between Tanya and Jane. In an open space such as theirs, borders between teachers, or between teachers and a pedagogical spirit, dissolve into a “one-body relation” (Levin, 1985, p. 165). If we imagine Rose’s situation, we see her sensing the distance between herself and the other teacher. She can tell the teacher is closed off to her, and so her understanding and deeper sense of this teacher is distorted or hidden altogether. Rose very well could use her sense of this particular teacher’s closed-offness as a starting point from which she could move to openness. Levin imagines a walk where he first is consumed by his own thoughts, to-do lists, and worries. He is completely apart from the forested landscape that embraces him. Slowly he listens to the birds around him, feels the sunlight, and begins to merge with his surroundings and leave his inner woes behind. Rose, too, might consider which responses to the teacher in front of her are most likely to make the borders between them more porous. She could think about the previous experiences the teacher may have had with school librarians, or how late she was up grading, or if the students in her previous class period were more trying that day than usual.

Michelle shares that a teacher once accused her of getting the assistant principal job only because she is Black, and then that same teacher needed support from her in order to fulfill her obligations to her students. In order to protect pedagogy, Michelle found a way to protect herself and simultaneously open herself—one question at a time—to the experiences and needs of that teacher. As with the sense she would use to understand a challenging student, Michelle’s careful

attunement to that teacher led her to a place of compassion and the teacher to a path of incremental improvements. Rose's teacher sense, too, could lead to a relationship that benefits pedagogy in her school.

The Sounds and Sights Pedagogy Implies

Rose and Michelle see, in schools and their imaginations, possibilities for relationships with teachers that those teachers cannot even envision. Their sense of it all breathes life into the pedagogy now flowing between and around them. Teacher sense is the conduit through which pedagogy communicates to teacher leaders, just as the earth communicates to Stafford (1977) through the landscape in "In Response to a Question:"

The earth says have a place, be what that place
requires; hear the sound the birds imply
and see as deep as ridges go behind
each other. (Some people call their scenery flat,
their only picture framed by what they know:
I think around them rise a riches and a loss
too equal for their chart—but absolutely tall.)

...

The earth says where you live wear the kind
of color that your life is (gray shirt for me)
and by listening with the same bowed head that sings
draw all into one song, join
the sparrow on the lawn, and row that easy
way, the rage without met by the wings
within that guide you anywhere the wind blows.

Listening, I think that's what the earth says. (p. 75)

Everyone can see scenery. Those with what I would call "earth sense" (those who approach the earth with a question) can listen to it. Everyone can look at students. Everyone can look at teachers. Those with child sense and teacher sense (those who approach children, teachers, or pedagogy with a question), though, can hear and see

what pedagogy implies. Any resistance, distortion, or closed-offness teacher leaders encounter can be met “by the wings within” that resonate with the care at the core of teaching and learning.

Seeing sparks. Seeing schools the way the poet sees hidden ridges, teacher leaders can see the possibilities pedagogy lays in front of teachers who, with a nudge, could see them, too. Ambereen describes what it is like when she has this vision:

There's a spark. "Hey, what are you going to do about this? You're having a problem?" I use my probing questions. I use a lot of those questions to get them to reflect over their experiences and get them thinking about a solution. I do see a spark. When I meet a person, I realize they are passionate. I don't see that spark in everyone. When you see they have a passion or they care you get to know them.

Ambereen senses both the teacher's need and a possibility for them, just as van Manen (2015) says a teacher must always see and hear, i.e., sense, students' needs and possibilities. This “perceptive sensibility” (p. 79) means the teacher leader sees “more in teachers than teachers sometimes see in themselves” (Palmer, 1998, p. 158). Ambereen senses pedagogy and its relationship with the teacher in front of her through gestures, conspicuous and inconspicuous tip-offs, and the emotional wavelengths on which their conversation rides. Regardless of what the teacher says she needs or cannot do, Ambereen sees the teacher could in fact do something about the pedagogical problem. From there she does what Parker Palmer (1998) says leaders who “are to help create good talk about good teaching” must do: “Leaders must provide excuses and permissions to allow the real needs to be met” (p. 158). Her questions and her invitation open the door to dialogue and solutions.

When Michelle was a high school department chair, she saw a spark and provided permission for a teacher to reignite her engagement with teaching, including

work with colleagues and students. Michelle's teacher sense shows a teacher I will call Maria a different vision than what the teacher shows everyone else. Michelle shares:

I told [the department] about [the superintendent's] vision, some of his expectations and then we talked. How can that help shape the department that we are going to have? I got to know them a little bit, and I asked them for the things that they wanted to teach and they came back to me. I went to people strategically to make them team leads for their grade levels. I purposefully went to Maria to make her a ninth grade team leader. I was thinking that when she had her feet up on the table at the end of the day, and I was initially perturbed by that like the others, I was thinking we're not using her to her full potential. She needs to be utilized. You give her that and she's going to run with it.

Others see Maria, and Maria arguably sees herself, as a teacher-in-job-only or, to borrow Tanya's phrase, "a clock puncher." Michelle, however, sees a true teacher with a spark being held down or back by an invisible force. The invitation to be a team leader lifts that weight.

The spark can also be found in a situation. Dolly reads a publication, and her moment of recognition is a spark. She instantly sees that the opportunity to nominate her school for an award would be good for staff morale and student pride. Merleau-Ponty (2014) shares other examples of vision that senses active possibilities in an object or a situation:

A wooden wheel lying on the ground is not, *for vision*, the same as a wheel bearing a weight. A body at rest because no force is being exerted upon it is not, for vision, the same as a body in which opposing forces are being held in equilibrium. The light of a candle changes appearance for the child when, after having burned him, it ceases to attract the child's hand and becomes literally repulsive. Vision is already inhabited by a sense that gives it a function in the spectacle of the world and in our existence. (p. 52)

Everyone can *look at* a teacher in a staff room with her feet up doing nothing.

Michelle *sees* a teacher about to get up and lead others any second now; Michelle

brings the possibility that already exists forward so everyone can look at that teacher and see what Michelle sees. Teacher sense, always humming in the background of a teacher who is awakened to it, can be ignited by a spark of recognition of a moment, a situation, a teacher or the like that announces pedagogy's presence. Pedagogy's wellbeing depends upon the people, ideas, emotions, and moods of those moments, and teacher leaders' sense of why and how the sparks fly allows them to see where the situation and people can go next, not just where they are now.

The atmosphere. Teacher sense encompasses the backgrounds and experiences of teachers; student sense, of students. Guardian awareness of pedagogy requires, then, a sense of "attentive attunement of one's whole being to the child's experience of the world" (van Manen, 2015, p. 83) and the teacher's experience of the world. Teacher sense involves "reading" teachers and connecting with them on a compassionate level. It also asks teachers to be attuned to the atmosphere around them, where the atmosphere is the tonal quality of the world in which pedagogy exists and the teacher finds himself acting.

Different teacher leaders can tune in to different features of the atmosphere, but when they do tune in, they see or learn to see as fully as possible:

To see is to enter into a universe of beings that *show* themselves. . . . When I see the lamp on my table, I attribute to it not merely the qualities that are visible from my location, but also those that the fireplace, the walls, and the table can "see." The back of my lamp is merely the face that it "shows" to the fireplace. . . . The house has its water pipes, its foundation, and perhaps its cracks growing secretly in the thickness of the ceilings. We never see them, but it *has them*, together with its windows or chimneys that are visible for us. (Merleau-Ponty, 2014, pp. 70-72)

Dolly, Chris, Tanya, Rose, and Michelle all seek certain leadership roles to "be in the know." They sense the decisions in the air, or "coming down" (Tanya; Michelle) that

affect what happened in their own classrooms or in the classrooms they feel connected to (in a school, in a discipline, etc.). Dolly lives the effects of curriculum decisions that create an atmosphere of accountability and instead of positivity, pride, and curiosity. Tanya tries to work within professional learning structures mandated by the county, but it takes her some time to have a sense of how they come to life in teachers' routines, can-do's and can't-do's. They all sense when new decisions, made elsewhere by Somebody, are "coming down." Taking on those roles allows them to know more about the nature of the school system, including the parts—those secret cracks and obscured pipes—they may never see directly themselves. Personalizing the Somebodies means they can develop their "people sense" of others who share the same atmosphere. In some cases, they become the Somebodies themselves. They calibrate their sense of the atmospheres in which pedagogy must survive, as any responsible and response-able guardian would be called to do for whatever or whomever is in her charge.

This atmospheric awareness even seeps into teacher leaders' language. Ambereen, Chris, Dolly, Michelle, Rose, and Tanya feel the movements buzzing all around them from so many directions: "behind the scenes," "time to step up," "I'm not higher than you," "put into position," "find a way around, over, or through it," "top down, "higher ups," "on a pedestal and preaching down," "ones who come at it sideways," "above," and "what's coming down." I cannot help but think of the protective, sharp alertness of a parent walking a child through a parking lot whose every sense is on guard for cars or other threats to her child's safety. I also picture some generic spy movie in which the lead character moves cautiously through a

warehouse where someone could come at him from any angle including up; he is alert to every possibility at once even though he can only check on so many at once. All possibilities are equally important before he can learn more about his surroundings, especially the places that offer him safety and the ones that invite him to worry or fear. While teacher leaders likely do not always feel like they are practicing guardianship with such high stakes for physical well-being, knowledge allows them to orient themselves and safeguard whatever the pedagogy needs them to protect. It helps them make sense of everything coming their and pedagogy's way.

Teachers who nurture pedagogical exchanges and protect pedagogical possibilities are alert to the sides of the pedagogical situation they cannot see directly—they see behind whatever is happening. Envisioning those other sides, they can carve paths around, over, and through to possibilities that dwell there. Teacher leaders might attend to the atmosphere that policies create in schools and school systems, the atmosphere in the country or local community about the value of teachers and their work, the atmosphere in the staff room, or the atmosphere at professional development sessions led by the district's central office. The policies, speeches, laws, comments, and professional development classes are things anyone can witness; the teacher leader is attuned to their quality, their vibe, their tone, their subliminal messages, and overt signals.

Chris says “the split world thing” allows him to “get into one world or the other.” Rather than feel stuck on one place, he moves between, among, and through the atmosphere of the pedagogical world he shares with others. Dolly wants to ensure her school encourages excitement of teachers and students, so she navigates a field

with possibilities and obstacles using her vision of what is right in front of her, what has saturated the air, and what she thinks—or hopes—is around the corner. They have eyes in the back of their heads and are looking side-to-side, up down, and around for new situations or additions to the atmosphere, be they policies, people, or events. They see through curtains and know what is happening backstage.

Teachers-as-teacher-leaders' relationship with the atmosphere around them can also be characterized by the distance they feel between themselves and whatever is affecting the atmosphere. They could feel very apart from and yet close enough to be subjected to the policies, decisions, moods, and resources that affect pedagogy's ability to thrive. Being acted on heightens awareness of distance and borders; I can only feel pushed by you if you are separate from me. Teacher leaders can also bring the atmosphere into nearness when they move with it, move "through" it, and announce, or even assert, their presence. Michelle changes the way teachers in her department access teaching materials, a tangible change (putting books in hands) that also shifts the atmosphere from competitive to collaborative. They go from feeling like they cannot teach in certain ways to feeling like they can. Chris changes the inclusion policy in his district, and the atmosphere around teachers and students shifts to one that is filled with "I can" or "I could" for all students. Teacher leaders can bring the atmosphere near or hold it at a distance. Both are modes of the same relationship.

Teacher Leaders Are Authentically Bound to Teachers

The formation of self is not only a self-formative process; it also occurs through the mediation of others who open themselves and give of themselves. Teachers as pedagogues give their students access to the world, and more

importantly, they give access to the dialogue that they themselves hold with the world. (van Manen, 2015, p. 146)

While Max van Manen explores the depths of the relationships between teachers and students in pedagogy, the lived experiences of the teachers who join me in this study invite me to push the exploration of pedagogy further. I wonder about the lived relationship between and among teachers when at least one of them is engaged in what schools call teacher leadership or in what they feel counts, experientially, as teacher leadership. How do teachers come to find themselves encountering pedagogy through another teacher's experience of it? Whether the teachers are face-to-face or physically apart, or if one teaching is imagining a group somewhere out there who will benefit, what is it like to be in the process of coming-to-be as a teacher-among-teachers, "interwoven in a common project" (Leder, 1990, p. 97) to bring pedagogy to life?

The Opening: Constructing Silences to Break in Pedagogical Time

Encounters in which there is a mutual exchange of possibilities, ideas, and planned actions that result in some pedagogical good do not, of course, materialize out of thin air. How do teacher leaders experience what it is like to create the opening for them or recognize the opening when it announces itself? Tanya offers us the opportunity to witness one of the openings she creates so her colleagues can plan lessons that center student needs:

When I started to do the Understanding by Design training I knew what we were up against there: somebody who does the same old, same old, but couldn't get out of it because he was required to turn in units that had been revised. I was ready for it to be a struggle, but it actually wasn't. I started with something easy like, "Okay, so we had our meeting last week and everybody's working on these. Let me know if I can help you in any way." We had two teacher work days a year, so then I just said, "On our one work day next week

I'll be available if anybody needs help. I know that we need to turn these things in soon." That was it. He found me and said, "All right, let's look at this." He needed help. He had just been out there all by himself.

Tanya feels out the situation and the needs of the teacher. Her approach is reminiscent of Parker Palmer's (1998) advice:

If leaders are to help create good talk about good teaching, they need to discern the difference between what faculty sometimes say about themselves and what their real needs are. Then leaders must provide excuses and permissions to allow the real needs to be met. (p. 158)

In Tanya's situation, the school district implants into the atmosphere the need for teachers to turn in new units, but pedagogically the need of the teacher working with Tanya is to renew his thinking about instruction by peopling it with the needs of his students. Tanya, gently and with an open spirit, invokes the excuse he needs—the imminent due date—to engage with pedagogy that authentically sees and cares for students.

Tanya's offer is a beacon for that which the teacher seeks, perhaps even without realizing it. He needs to heal his teacherly loneliness, a way of naming the lived experience of distance between a teacher and the other teachers and students who people pedagogy. Tanya's invitation moves in two circles of time. The first is the one the school district creates. All unit plans are due on that date. Regardless of each teacher's actions and inactions, all teachers speed toward this deadline in calendar and school bell time. The second is the one pedagogy creates that seems to stretch beyond the first. The due date is the due date, yet Tanya brings her colleague into pedagogical time that gives space to think, reflect, and act about one's own needs as a teacher and the needs of one's students. Palmer (1998) describes the patience of educational leadership, and in doing so touches on pedagogical time:

If we want to support each other's inner lives, we must remember a simple truth: the human soul does not want to be fixed, it wants simply to be seen and heard. If we want to see and hear a person's soul, there is another truth we must remember: the soul is like a wild animal—tough, resilient, and yet shy. When we go crashing through the woods shouting for it to come out so we can help it, the soul will stay in hiding. But if we are willing to sit quietly and wait for a while, the soul may show itself. (p. 151)

Tanya resides in the calm silence even as the school's circle of time swirls about her. She makes an offer that takes advantage of the deadline, and then provides silence and time for the teachers around her to consider it. She makes a second offer. Silence. Her colleague accepts her invitation and shows himself as a teacher who has a pedagogical question.

Tanya has to create the space for the encounter, and she is not even sure it is possible at first. She extends the same patience to herself that she exercises with her colleague. Rose also has to be patient and still when she extends an invitation to her colleague:

I was just talking to another teacher in the building. He and I have been teaching the same amount of time, and he was saying that the kids were having behavior problems. I was like, "Well, if you end up here next year," because he's looking for another job with a different group of kids, "why don't you come and see me in the library and we'll come up with some fun ways where you can teach the kids the skills you want to teach them and the curriculum you want to teach them, but in a different way?" He goes, "Like shake it up a little?" "Yes." There's quick and easy web tools you can use so the kids buy into the learning. If you end up wanting to use the library as a way to do that, bring in the kids. Let's do it."

Rose asks her colleague to sit in the pocket of pedagogical time with her where the language is based on having time for reflection, questions, and possibilities that move toward action with students. She opens that portal with a question and a vision of what could be possible. In a transition of his own, he will decide where his own pedagogical calls must lead him. Rose meets him where he is now and where he

could be in the future if he remains. Both versions of himself stand before Rose in this pedagogical moment.

When a teacher is asked about her teacher leadership and says, “I have no time,” what is she saying? Study after study find time constraints restrict teachers’ abilities to feel successful in their teacher leadership roles (e.g., Angelle & DeHart, 2011; Margolis, 2012; Wenner & Campbell, 2016)—in their teaching roles, too, but that is an extended topic to explore another day. Ambereen says one of the reasons she turns down new opportunities is not having time. Rose, Tanya, and Dolly wonder about how they make time for their leadership when they do not have extra hours. Limited on clock time, they make pockets of pedagogical, reflective, slower moving time. The strength required for a single teacher to hold calendar, clock, and school bell time back enough to make time to reflect on his individual teaching practice is tremendous. Teacher leaders volunteer to hold back the pressures of clock time to make a space big enough for more than one person. It is easy to imagine teacher leaders’ exhaustion and elation as pathic, physical, mental, and emotional. It is also easy to imagine how much more difficult or how much more joyous the work of pushing back the walls of clock time can be depending on whether or not or how willingly others join in to hold the space.

Graham’s (1980) poem, “Approaches to How They Behave,” evokes the assertive creativity and persistence Tanya and Rose muster to create pedagogical possibility:

Having to construct the silence first
To speak out on I realize
The silence even itself floats
At my ear-side with a character

I have not met before. Hello
Hello I shout but that silence
Floats steady, will not be marked
By an off-hand shout. For some reason
It refuses to be broken now
By what I thought was worth saying.
If I wait a while, if I look out
At the heavy greedy rooks on the wall
It will disperse. Now I construct
A new silence I hope to break.

The opportunities for Tanya and Rose to encounter their colleagues, authentically engaged in pedagogy, are invisible before they bring them into being. When Tanya imagines the invitation going out to a “same old same old” teacher who would have turned away before, the silence seems elusive. Rose does not yet know if her colleague will show up next year. Their quiet invitations make no assumptions or demands, and it is because of the sensitive approach, not in spite of it, that they construct silence, space, and time for teachers to enter and occupy together.

The Suspense: The Fragility of Possible Encounters

What is it like in the space on the other side of the opening, through the looking glass where the teachers have agreed to give it a go but do not know what comes next? They are between possibilities in that moment, perhaps in ways that would feel similar to the encounter Leder (1980) imagines. In one world, he is walking with a friend in the forest. Their pace falls into step with each other. He enjoys “things more and in a different way than when [he] had come alone.” Talk gives way to “silent enjoyment” of surroundings and to a state in which he is not aware of his own movements or that of his companion. In that moment, “[their] bodies stand in cotransparency, ecstatically involved with a shared world. The structure of bodily disappearance is . . . fundamentally preserved in this being-with-

another” (p. 94). In another world, the encounter goes a very different way. His companion glares at him. He is painfully aware:

She thinks that something is wrong with me: that my words, gestures, and comportment are those of a seriously unbalanced man. . . . As I point out something in the forest, she seems struck by the outlandishness of my gestures, not by what I am gesturing toward. . . . We no longer transcend together to a common landscape or allow [their] moods and thoughts to mingle. The Other is interested in scrutinizing [his] intentions from the outside, not taking them within. (p. 95)

The question is which path will become real, because at the moment he enters the forest with this companion, both (and many other) possibilities exist for them and the space between them. What is it like there, as a teacher leader opens day one of a new committee or when he greets his intern for a post-observation conference, balanced on the edge of a common landscape where moods and thoughts among teachers and teachers-as-teacher-leaders *could* mingle if they can only travel to this shared world together? Edges can be precarious and hopeful places.

Withering stares. The turning point for Leder’s (1980) journey through the forest is the gaze of his companion. The tone, mood, gestures are all different, too, but the gaze is what truly has the power to fix him in his place as either the object of his companion’s scrutiny or as a fellow being who dwells in the landscape with her. The gaze tells him how to read the rest. Dolly journeys into a colleague’s classroom, and her gaze fixes the Other Teacher:

Well, there I was. I had a coworker who, for whatever reason, wasn't doing her job. This particular person was having trouble. I mean, it was not a secret. I was the department chair at the time and the principal was like, “I just don't know what to do. I've talked to her. Well, I need you to go observe her.” I don't know if she thought, because I wasn't the principal, I would be able to get through to her better or what. I was just like, “Okay.” I didn't feel comfortable observing my colleague. I didn't even as the department chair, because we taught the same number of classes. I wasn't her supervisor. . . . I

just felt extremely uncomfortable. I just didn't feel like that was my role but I was put into that position, and I did it. She listened to me just like she listened to the principal, which was zero, and it just made me feel very uncomfortable.

Putting to the side the pedagogical implications of having a person employed as a teacher who is not truly, authentically a teacher (as troubling as that scenario is with children at risk), the present phenomenological question about teachers' experience of teacher leadership asks us to attend to something else in this description. At her principal's request, Dolly walks into another teacher's classroom with an objectifying, evaluative eye. It is the "tactful eye [that] makes contact, makes personal relationships possible" (van Manen, 2015, p. 82), and Dolly's discomfort announces to her that she is creating distance, rather than mutual reflection, between herself and her colleague. Martin Buber (1990) explains why Dolly's untactful gaze causes the rupture both she and her colleague feel:

When I confront a human being as my You and speak the basic word I-You to him, then he is no thing among things nor does he consist of things. He is no longer He or She, limited by other Hes and Shes, a dot in the world grid of space and time, nor a condition that can be experienced and described, a loose bundle of named qualities. . . . I can abstract from him the color of his hair or the color of his speech or the color of his graciousness; I have to do this again and again; but immediately he is no longer You. . . . [I]mmediately he becomes a He or a She, an It, and no longer remains my You. (p. 59)

The evaluating eye Dolly borrows from her principal sees the "loose bundle" of teaching moves, including teaching moves not made, gestures, classroom layout, etc.

Dolly and her colleague are not engaged in a mutual exploration of the classroom and the teaching and learning that belongs to it. The colleague rebuffs the look, and Dolly does, too. Even though her own eyes create the look, it does not originate from Dolly. The principal looks at the other teacher through Dolly's eyes. The look alienates both teachers in that moment. I imagine the colleague is aware of

her “object-body, now defined and delimited by a foreign gaze” (Leder, 1980, p. 96). Dolly senses her own body all the more because her eyes are not her own, and because she feels responsible for making her and her colleague feel this way. Dolly’s gaze brings them both out of pedagogical space and time.

Overtures by teacher leaders to open pedagogical spaces are risky. Borrowing Buber’s language, they can create an I-It rift instead of a I-You mutual incorporation in pedagogy. Rose self-consciously constructs a pedagogical look to avert that rift: “I will recruit people, but I don’t, I mean, I’m just saying you would approach somebody with both eyebrows up, and the happy face, and then you ease them in.” Ambereen tries to be as helpful as possible when giving a staff development presentation, offering resources she hopes will be useful. She describes how some engage as learners with her and the resources, and others engage with her by firing judgmental looks at her:

A group of 34 teachers signed up. I've presented and facilitated in front of teachers before. But I was stressed. My kids [students] knew I was stressed out. I don't get stressed at all. They could tell that day. Some teachers got something out of it. I forwarded it to the entire school, so everyone had access to it. Then there are some people in there that didn't need it. They don't want to need it. It was a very nerve-racking experience because my colleagues were critical. In the audience there are several people who have really strong biases against you for a number of reasons. Because of those biases, I knew I had to be like extra top of my game because I would get all those impressions then they would be like, "Why should I do that in my classroom?"

Ambereen is concerned about two impressions. She wants her colleagues to think highly of her, and she is also concerned about the impression, in the literal sense of pressure that leaves a lasting mark, their judgments can make on her and her now objectified presence. Aware of the pressing and impressing looks she and her colleagues exchange, Ambereen senses she is participating in an encounter marked by

separation so great it cannot sustain a mutual experience where all are with each other in the flow of a shared pedagogical aim.

Overcoming the distance. Rose, Dolly, and Ambereen seek moments in the previous descriptions of “Being-there-too with them” in a “with-world” (Heidegger, 1962/2008, pp. 154-155). In a with-world, beings do not encounter each other as people who do things for them, as tools might. Rose tries to keep the possibility open of entering that common landscape wherein mutual exploration of teaching and learning can happen, but she feels her title getting in between her and those she is inviting into the clearing with her. She describes an experience from when she was a team leader:

I'm not here to tell everyone what to do. I would be like, "Oh, so hi, everyone." I didn't say, "I'm the team lead," or anything. I just used the document that they gave us to drive what the meeting would be about. I remember using the paper. "The leader is the paper, and we are all doing it together. It's not really me. I'm not really leading you," but I was leading them. My approach was, "We're all the same. I'm not any bigger or higher than you. I'm just the person with the pencil, and I'm writing, and I have to submit it. That's the only difference."

Instead of letting her leadership role separate her and her colleagues, Rose tries to move, metaphorically, to the same side of the table as them so they are all facing and working in the same direction, i.e., towards the document they are required to complete and submit to the assistant principal.

Rose experiences what Leder (1990) describes as “a discrepancy in power” (p. 98):

When confronting another who has potential power over one's life and projects—the patient with the doctor, student with professor, prisoner with jailer—there is a tendency on the part of the powerless to a heightened self-awareness. The difference in power often precludes the assumption of

cosubjectivity. It is not a matter of a reciprocal exchange of intentions, so much as one body submitting to the intentions of another. (p. 98)

Rose might add “teacher with team lead” to Leder’s examples. She senses or even pre-senses that her colleagues will have this heightened self-awareness. She enters her own heightened state, and so might also add to Leder’s description that teacher leaders are often aware or even hyperaware, because pedagogy is at risk, of the power or authority their titles convey. She wants to enter into cosubjectivity and simultaneously feels her potential to open that space and to close it off. The precarious edge of a possible authentic encounter among teachers resides within Rose herself, and she must carry that tension.

Tanya tells about a time in her past when she believes she crossed the line.

Tanya worries she steamrolled a colleague:

I have gotten off on the wrong foot with this poor little girl because she is going to see me as somebody who's coming in here with eighteen years experience, who knows how to answer all these questions, and is going guns blazing, and changing up everything that they've been doing lately. That is not what I meant to do. I do not want to cause that kind of problem before I even start.

Tanya’s heightened awareness of her teacherly power announces itself in describing her colleague as a “poor little girl” in the face of a teacher with eighteen years of experience and knowledge. Tanya feels uncomfortably imposing, like a menacing giant. She worries she was far too loud with her “guns blazing” to create the silence necessary for pedagogical moments in which teachers can breathe. Tanya creates distance. Instead Tanya wishes she had, as Rose put it, “tried to find out why they’re doing it without making them feel like they have to defend.” Rose calls her own

alternative to blazing guns, “a work-around where I can hand-hold or ease others” into closing the distance and arriving at a common ground.

The Encounter: Constructing Shared Pedagogical Worlds

Heidegger (1962/2008) returns to the notion that when a teacher-as-teacher-leader opens an engagement with others in order to nurture pedagogy, the situation can go any number of ways:

Being-with-one-another which arises from one's doing the same thing as someone else, not only keeps for the most part within the outer limits, but enters the mode of distance and reserve. The Being-with-one-another of those who are hired for the same affair often thrives only on mistrust. On the other hand, when they devote themselves to the same affair in common, their doing so is determined by the manner in which their Dasein, each in its own way, has been taken hold of. They thus become authentically bound together, and this makes possible the right kind of objectivity, which frees the Other in his freedom for himself. (pp. 158-159)

When they are not engrossed in same teacherly concern—be it students, a policy, or a lesson plan—then each of the gathered teachers is focused on his and her own concerns. Paradoxically, losing themselves in pedagogy is a kind of freedom for teachers and teachers-as-teacher-leaders. It is a connection born of mutual relationship to pedagogical care and is lived by teaching and learning from each other. In that connection each is free to be the teacher he is called to be. Rose dwells in the very moment Heidegger describes: “I'm not going to be like, ‘Come on in. You come up with an idea, and I'll supply the library.’ I want to be a leader, but I'm not going to recruit people that aren't interested.” Wanting freedom for herself and her colleagues, Rose does everything she can to avoid the distance that compliance breeds among teachers. Both modes, mutual engrossment and distance, are aspects of being bound together as teachers; they are merely different degrees. Having explored

what the experience of distance among teachers with a teacher leader can be like, the next question is, What are those moments of freedom like?

Taking flight. Tanya shares an image of herself and her trapeze instructor, arms locked in midair, to evoke what teacher leadership is like for her (see Appendix F). She looks at the photograph, sighs, and says, “When it works it feels so good. You feel like you're flying, and it's awesome.” In the moment they take flight, the mechanics drift into the background overtaken by the sensation of freedom. So much goes into creating that moment:

You can't do this by yourself. You're not in it by yourself. . . . You're on the bar, and you swing out and all you do is you put your arms out like this. This guy does all the work. He doesn't get any of the credit. My mom was taking pictures of me. She didn't care about the dude. My mom took pictures of my sister and my friend. He got nothing for all of his work. I think that's true of teacher leadership as well. You're there helping other people, and you're helping them achieve what they set out to do and not necessarily really your own goals. (Tanya)

When Tanya says, “he got nothing,” she means he does not get the recognition. The photograph is her mother's attempt to capture the moment when her daughter takes flight, not the moment this nameless instructor and Tanya fly. Tanya knows, though, that the instructor does get the thrill of helping her fly. As a teacher leader, she feels that same thrill when a teacher or school or school atmosphere in her care allows pedagogy to take flight.

Nel Noddings (2005) offers an additional perspective:

This is motivational displacement, the sense that our motive energy is flowing toward others and their projects. I receive what the other conveys, and I want to respond in a way that furthers the other's purpose or project. Experiencing motivational displacement, one begins to think. Just as we consider, play, and reflect on our own projects, we now think what we can do to help another. Engrossment and motivational displacement do not tell us what to do; they merely characterize our consciousness when we care. But the thinking that we

do will now be as careful as it is in our own service. We are seized by the needs of another. (p. 16)

Energy flows between Tanya and her instructor through their locked arms and their shared desire for Tanya to fly. The instructor is the one with the experience and the vision of what flight on the trapeze should look and feel like; he can sense the adjustments that are asking to be made. He focuses entirely on Tanya, moving in response to her needs. Tanya sees her own teacher leadership in the photograph, because it captures the moment when another teacher's project becomes her own. It is difficult to see where one teacher ends and the other begins, and their shared goal to improve conditions for teaching and learning transcends them both.

Being seized by what pedagogy needs and what another teacher needs to get to that goal is not without risks. Tanya goes on:

Sometimes you fail and you hit the net. On my first try it didn't work out so well. On my second try he only got a good grip on one of my hands. He kept going. He got yelled at after by the people who said, "You know better than that. That can hurt her shoulder or her arm or whatever." He said, "She was fine. I wanted her to." He should have let me go, and he didn't because he wanted me to have that experience.

Of course, the instructor had already taught Tanya how to fall into the net and tumble out of it. He foresaw the possibility of falling and prepared her for it. He also sees and chooses between the possibilities of letting her go and keeping a grip. He knows her, flying, and himself well enough to know she would be the better for keeping the grip. Teacher leaders see so many possibilities in front of them and in front of the teachers in their care. Engrossed in the possible worlds of the ones they hold, teacher leaders can take hold of others and fly.

I find myself connecting Tanya's photograph to an exchange during a group conversation among me, Tanya, and Rose. Rose tells Tanya she positively affected Rose's teaching when we all taught at the same school, "and you may not have even realized it." I agree. I recollect a time, in detail, when I went to Tanya in the library for help shaping a series of lessons for my juniors. I left feeling elated. I accomplished what I needed to and my students were in wonderful hands. I knew that in the future, when the lessons happened and we co-taught them, my students were going to learn. Tanya responds: "I don't even remember the story you were telling me, but that's because I feel like that's what I'm supposed to be doing. It may have been different for you because that wasn't what you were used to, but for me that's just what I... that's what it is." Since that exchange I have been wondering if both the leader and the led feel the sensation of flight the same way, and if it matters or what it means for the phenomenon of teacher leadership when they do not.

Thinking that through, I remember there are others in Tanya's trapeze class. Her sister and some friends join her. The instructor teaches additional classes, too, maybe over years. Tanya has a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Her mother takes pictures. For the instructor, it is a day at the office. He does not ask his mother to take pictures of him every time he helps a new student to fly. He feels a sense of accomplishment, though, in that he wants Tanya to fly and is committed enough to it to brave the censure that follows. Tanya was similarly committed to me, Rose, and all the others she worked with years ago. That is how Rose and I remember those engagements with her. Tanya not remembering now that she was engrossed in Rose's and my teaching in the past does not mean Tanya was not engrossed. It is also quite

possible the trapeze instructor does not remember his time with Tanya. Yet, there is photographic evidence that he and Tanya flew.

Presence in absence. I also find myself wondering about teacher leadership that exists across time and space. We can imagine Tanya taking more classes from her instructor to the point she can spend some time on the trapeze without him. At times she would hear his instruction in her mind. She might even repeat some of his teachings to others. He would remain present for her even in his absence. His influence would continue. What is the nature of teacher leadership when they are not physically together and are instead present in their absence?

Chris shares his own experience of being the present but absent leader. Absence, of course, does not mean he neglects responsibility; rather, his presence leads others whether his body is in the room or not. At the time of this description, he is a lead coordinator for special services (SSC) at his school:

Once we got a system down there was no need to talk to me unless you had a problem. It was very easy. People loved it, because normally SSCs are notorious for being cold . . . like, "Don't mess with my process." Mine just went, so it was happy. "Okay. You need something? Cool. Here's what you do. It's right there. If you get stuck, give me a holler." It really ran itself.

His absence is not a chilly distance. Ironically, the teachers feel the assertive presence of the controlling, hands-on predecessors as a kind of distance. This bodied presence is unresponsive to their needs as teachers working with children. Chris, on the other hand, designs a process that “runs itself,” and yet it engenders happiness and exchanges that address problems. He is present. The teachers form a relationship with him through the process that is strong enough for them to feel comfortable

approaching him at their most vulnerable—when they have a problem and have to say, “I don’t know what to do now. Help me meet the needs of my students.”

Rose recalls what it is like to experience the absence and presence of teacher leaders who continue to influence her. To bring both of those teacher leaders into presence for us, I will give space to Rose’s descriptions of them. The first is her mentor teacher during her first year of teaching.

She would come in and she would give me ideas, and she was wonderful. She’s this older lady, I think she was in her 80s at that point, so full of energy and life. I loved her. . . . It’s so funny because I’m actually teaching the stuff that she was helping me with way back then. She was the beginning person that started me visualizing how the kids could keep the information separate. For me, I could have easily said, “Well, read it.” That’s how I learned it. Read it. But that is not how most people learn, I learned from her. She was like, “Have them make a chart of all the famous people during the golden age of Athens.”

The second absent-yet-present teacher leader for Rose is the teacher whose classroom Rose filled her first year of her teaching. Rose was a long-term substitute for a teacher who was very ill and soon after passed away:

I knew that the students loved her, and when I came in I think they were a mess. They missed her, and I had access to all of her stuff. She had books on her shelf that ever since then I’ve kept a library of. I was just doing my student teaching. I didn’t ever think about keeping a library in my classroom. They didn’t say, “Take all your books to school. Take books and show kids.” She was there, even when she wasn’t there. . . . I came in and had my rules, but she had something in her rules. She kept her rules simple, too, and I’ve always kept rules simple because of her. Her rules were, “it’s the teacher’s right to teach and the student’s right to learn. You can’t violate these rights.” That’s all my rules. Right there. I’ve used that for 21 years because of her. / I never even saw her in action, teaching.

Present now for us, these two teachers remain present for Rose in her approach to instruction, her bookcase, and the principles that guide interactions in the pedagogical spaces she opens with students. Their influence and leadership continue. Teacher

leadership, for Rose, occurs out of time, space, and place. Are there natural boundaries or limits to the phenomenon of teacher leadership?

Ambereen wonders about that question, too. She is about to leave her classroom teaching role and take a job where she works with teachers in her district and with a union. She explains to herself as much as to me, “I’m transitioning to working with teachers, and I’m still impacting students in some way. . . . If I were going into the central office, I don’t know if I would say the same thing.” Even though she will not be teaching students in a classroom, she can still see the students; even though they are faceless, she will help them. She knows she will be face-to-face with teachers. Ambereen comes down on the side of believing her experience of students, absent though she will be from their classrooms, and her shared space, time, and place with teachers will keep her within the limits of teacher leadership.

Continuing to wonder about how far physical or relational distance between teacher leaders and teachers or students can stretch before we hit the limits of teacher leadership, I turn to Tanya. She similarly feels a connection with the teachers who will benefit from the Great Books reading lists the committee she is on creates, and “takes on faith” that her work with teachers will positively affect students. As I talk with her one afternoon, a teacher walks in to take pictures of posters in the library from an activity Tanya created with her. This teacher is moving to a new school and wants to be able to do the activity there. Tanya will be present in that teacher’s school and with that teacher’s students. She marvels that her intention was not to create an activity that will live on in that way, and yet it will stretch into the future.

The teachers and students are still there with the teacher leaders; the teacher leaders' felt sense of responsibility creates a response-ability that crosses distance (Levinas, 1981/2011). Noddings (1984/2013) might say they are in a "web of care" (p. xvii) because "even in physical absence, acts at a distance bear the signs of presence. . . . The caring attitude . . . pervades the situational time-space" (p. 19). Experientially speaking, the authentic pedagogical connection brings distant teachers and students nearer to Tanya and Ambereen than the biased teachers were who fired disapproving glances at Ambereen from across the room.

The very nature of the distance between me and teachers, students, and schools pervades the questions I have been asking about myself about whether or not I still count as a teacher or teacher leader. At this moment, I question what I am counting by. If by physical distance and direct responsibility in job descriptions, I am pretty far away from students and schools and am definitely more distant from the daily work of teachers than when I taught; if by phenomenological distance, I feel more near to the teachers I wanted to take care of now than when I left the classroom when I could not find the path to the landscape we could share together. I know my and my colleagues' work at the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards touches the lives of tens of thousands of teachers and all of their students. Sometimes I work directly with groups of teachers who are designing the Board certification assessments or who are writing the standards of accomplished practice on which they are based. Other times I am making or participating in decisions about the direction of the certification program. Usually I am completely invisible to teachers who are rightly engrossed in their classrooms and who instead form an intimate, long-standing

relationship with the standards and assessments I supported others in creating. I imagine the impact this work will have on the staff at the National Board (many of whom are teachers who now work there), on the atmosphere in which teachers strive in schools across the country, and on teachers who want to sit, are sitting, or have sat for Board certification.

I come to this part of my own phenomenological journey feeling authentically bound to the teachers in National Board's care. My invisibility means the teachers who did the work of creating the assessments and standards and who earn Board certification can stand forth. I may not be teaching in a high school classroom anymore, but I am a teacher who takes care of other teachers and of pedagogy.

CHAPTER FIVE: PROFESSIONAL POSSIBILITIES FOR TEACHERS IN A BORDERLESS FIELD OF EDUCATION

This chapter opens a space of reflection on the meaning that resides in the study's themes, a space of questions that give life to new possibilities, and a space of action where we can move forward with new understandings of how teachers experience teacher leadership. Reflecting on the themes and the experiences of the teachers who joined me, I find myself in a new kind of between. I am poised between the phenomenological lived experience of teachers who experience teacher leadership and the ways teacher leadership is defined, studied, and architected in everyday schools, studies, and programs. I am in this between as both a teacher who experienced (or experiences) teacher leadership and as a researcher and certification specialist who participates in defining and measuring what teachers do. I am also between my own past where I wondered if I had run out of space as a teacher and a future where I can act with new understandings of these experiences. I am getting my bearings all over again in the "field"—the study and the wide-open landscape—of education.

This particular between-past-and-future exists for others who dwell in teacher leadership or among teachers, too. I am certainly not the only person in education who has experienced or wonders about teacher leadership. This between is a place of togetherness where lived experiences of teachers can be brought into conversation with prevailing language, customs, and practices:

Our goal should be to let things (from the most accessible physical things to the most elusive psychical feelings and thoughts) present themselves to us without straight jacketing them in overly constrictive concepts or passing

them over in idle talk or burying them in misleading beliefs. (Casey, 2017, p. 316)

The implication of Casey's call to action is that care is required to put those lived experiences and prevailing norms into conversation and not let the day-to-day practices, wishes, and policies rush in and drown out voices. Here, in this new care-full between, if we are quiet and still in pedagogical time, we can let teachers show us places where those prevailing norms about teacher leadership cause them to live inconsistencies or disparities and joy or freedom. Teachers can show us ways to open new possibilities for supporting their guardianship of pedagogy. Betweens are naturally places for questions and of possibility. Returning to the phenomenological question of the study, *What are teachers' lived experiences of teacher leadership*, new questions now arise: How do teachers-as-teacher-leaders move through and to pedagogical places? In these new between that are action-oriented and forward-looking, who are we called to be in response to teachers' experiences? For me, creating this between is a hopeful act of teacher leadership.

Reflecting on the Meaning that Resides in Teachers' Experiences of Teacher Leadership

I began this phenomenological journey experiencing teacher leadership as its own kind of between—a “split world” (Chris) between teaching and leading. That is not the place in which I find myself now. Casey, above, says to put beliefs that can constrain understanding to the side. In earlier chapters, a humble traveler from Flatland says to explore as many dimensions as possible and not assume one place, such as Flatland, is the only place. Heidegger (1962/2008) goes further by

acknowledging there are times when one might be tempted to say, “*Dasein is the Being* of this ‘between,’” but then he urges caution:

[T]o take our orientation from this ‘between’ would still be misleading. For with such an orientation we would also be covertly assuming the entities between which this ‘between,’ as such, ‘is,’ and we would be doing so in a way which is ontologically vague. The “between” is already conceived as the result of the *convenientia* of two things that are present-at-hand. But to assume these beforehand always *splits* the phenomenon asunder, and there is no prospect of putting it together again from the fragments. Not only do we lack the ‘cement,’ even the ‘scheme’ in accordance with which this joining-together is to be accomplished has been split asunder, or never as yet unveiled. What is decisive for ontology is to prevent the splitting of the phenomenon—in other words, to hold its positive phenomenal content secure. (p. 170)

Heidegger offers advice specific to a phenomenon that at first glance presents itself as a conglomeration, as is the case with teacher leader. We run the risk of covering over teachers’ experiences if we automatically assume teacher leadership must be some kind of combination of teaching and leading. This assumption splits the phenomenon in half before we have fully understood it. Even more provocatively, he prompts us to consider that we do not even have the luxury of assuming we understand what teaching ‘is’ and what leading ‘is.’ Rather than reflect on the themes while assuming teacher leadership is a combination phenomenon, let us take a step back, or up, and see how these teachers move in their spaces with their pedagogical bodies of knowledge that have “student sense,” as they are led by pedagogical needs, as they hone their “teacher sense,” and while they are authentically connected to teachers. From there, questions, insights, and pedagogical possibilities can emerge.

Expanding from the Classroom and Across the Betweens

If we look at Dolly from the outside or from above it might not seem like she has travelled very far. She has taught in the same classroom her entire career; yet, her

story is full of motion towards possibilities for her colleagues, students, and school. We might say Michelle and Chris have travelled the farthest from teaching as we currently define it, because they have occupied administrative positions that do not require classroom time. Michelle and Chris have never stopped feeling like teachers in their cores, though. Neither have Rose and Ambereen, who are about to leave the classrooms they have known for new roles, Rose for the school library and Ambereen for a full-time union position. They make pedagogy possible wherever they travel, whether they write policy, influence legislators, conduct professional development, teach a pre-service methods course, mentor a new teacher, serve on a committee, become a principal, or provide instructional coaching. They all see and sense the world as teachers.

Other teachers who publish action research also describe a similar expansion of their work and world view as teachers. Scott Storm (2016) moves from inquiry about his own classroom, to shared inquiry with another teacher, to shared inquiry within the school, to work with the principal, to engaging with research communities and specialized professional associations. He remains employed as a teacher for his journey and argues that all of these spaces should be professional homes for teachers. Kathleen Melville (2016) begins taking on formal leadership assignments in one school, and then, feeling disconnected from authentic leadership that affects teaching and learning, moves to professional learning groups outside her school and to a new teacher-led school. Both Storm and Melville say they “get distance from the hustle and bustle of the classroom” (Storm, 2016, p. 66) for the perspective they need: “In order to be a teacher leader, I had to leave that [classroom] context—either literally or

figuratively. Sometimes I literally crossed the city . . . sometimes we met in my classroom, and I made a figurative transition into a different place” (Melville, 2016, p. 54). They remain connected to the classroom even as they are compelled to travel away from it in order to render pedagogical services based on needs they perceive.

Researchers, too, have shifted and now note teacher leadership, for teachers, seems to be less about a particular role and more about a “stance” (Hunzicker, 2017). “Stance” is a curious term because it primarily refers here to a mental, ethical, or professional outlook that affects self-identity, decision making, and action; it also, perhaps unintentionally but meaningfully, evokes the importance of physicality to a teacher. The place where one stands is connected to how that teacher understands himself, an idea I will come back to. Lieberman and Miller (2004) describe teachers who “expand the vision of who and what they are” (p. 11) as they move around, in, and through classrooms. Fairman and Mackenzie (2012) report that teachers begin their leadership journeys by slaking their own thirsts for knowledge and then move into leadership “spheres” where they work with teachers and other stakeholders for broader influences. Cherkowski (2018) argues for “conceptualizing the work of teacher leadership as a mindset, a sense of agency, or stance” (p. 64) in which teachers become sensitive to opportunities for action.

The Five Core Propositions maintained by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (2016) also nod to the expanding vision and movement of experienced teachers. The Five Core Propositions describe what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do and were authored by teachers, teacher educators, researchers, and other key stakeholders. Notably, the fifth states

accomplished teachers are members of learning communities who actively engage with colleagues, communities, and families to further student learning. The proposition and accompanying standards explain the range of classroom-related and classroom-centered advocacy, leadership, and professional learning teachers engage in—everything from positively influencing a mandated school-based professional learning community, to two-way communication with parents, to leading a regional chapter of a specialized professional association (e.g., National Council for Teachers of Mathematics). The teacher-authored propositions place leadership work, even if it is not with the teacher’s own students or school (although it certainly can be and often is), within the domain of what teachers can and should be able to do.

Expanding Territories of Teachership

This naturally evolving expansion of territory and vision calls me to wonder: What if work beyond the classroom *is* part of being a teacher, ontologically speaking? Related, the notion of teacher leadership as a stance such that a classroom teacher can exercise leadership without a formal leadership role calls me to wonder: If leadership can exist in roles teachers hold, can our field of education be designed such that teachership exists in roles leaders hold (e.g., principal, state department of education employee)? Etymologically, teachership, based on the meaning of “-ship” would be the “state or condition of being” a teacher (Harper, 2018), hinting at less of a confined role and more of a state of being or teacherly stance one’s being might take in the world. Is there room in teachership for those who do not always have formal teacher roles and express their teacher-being in other places? Is there room in teachership for

those who teach in classrooms while expressing their expanded pedagogical vision and know-how in ways that could be recognized as leadership?

Borrowing from Heidegger, what if teaching and teacher leadership are not automatically and fundamentally different states of being for beings-as-teachers? What if our belief in the constructed divisions between teaching and leading is responsible for artificially separating teaching into teaching, teacher leadership, and leadership? If so, programs that show teachers they can lead without leaving the classroom could be efforts to join back together what our systems separated but were never really separate, in the core of our beings as educators, to begin with. What if we are trying to solve a problem of our own making with the idea of “teacher leadership?”

The name “teacher leadership” could also be our way of starting to notice teachers’ expanded vision and an early attempt at naming what it means to take care of teachers in pedagogical spaces. Resources, studies, policies, and programs that focus on students see the teacher as the one who enacts pedagogy for the child; however, taking care of pedagogy means taking care of both the teachers and the students. Interestingly, the word *pedagogy* is constructed from the standpoint of the teacher as the one who leads children. There is no word that captures what it means for a teacher to educate the teacher in the pedagogical relationship or to create conditions that nurture pedagogy.

Is “teacher leadership” that word? Heidegger would say we are jumping to conclusions again. John Lennon even asks us to imagine what the world would be like if we suspend belief in dividing lines perpetuate through our belief in them. So in

the spirit of continuing to suspend names and norms that can cover teachers' experiences, let us ask: what if *teaching itself* has room for expanded vision? What if "teaching" is the proper name, and we have no need for imagining divisions among teaching, teacher leadership, or even leadership to describe how teachers travel and expand as their expertise, experience, and pedagogical senses grow? What new possibilities for pedagogy and teachers' professions reside in such a landscape—a wide open field of education where *teachership* gives teachers room to sit and see or move in any direction?

I see in the themes that as teachers grow in their careers, they experience themselves grow into pedagogy, in the fullest sense of the word, until they embody it and it animates them. They see the world with teacher eyes and feel their way through it with teacher sense and awareness. "Teacher leaders" are teachers who "do" or "have done" pedagogy themselves and make pedagogy possible for other teachers and students. They tend to the pedagogy that is in others' hands. They do so with whatever resources, roles, and relationships will allow them to meet this particular need at this particular time in this particular context. The work is not extra; it is "just what [they] do" (Tanya). When teachers say, "It's just what I do," it might function on the surface as a self-deprecating statement, but the true being of teachers announces itself in those moments. What is really being said is, "What you call leadership, is actually what *I do in my being as a teacher*." In other words, the roles do not make the teacher leader. Being-as-teachers make something of teacher leadership roles. How can we come to care for teachership, for all aspects of what it means to be a teacher, i.e., expanding one's pedagogical sensitivity for as long or as

deeply as possible in whatever places or for whatever people crave pedagogical opportunities?

Edges and Limits of Teachers' Territories

What is the lived significance for teachers of this expanded awareness of teacher-ness, and what does this awareness call us to be in response to it? At this precise moment, it requires our continued suspension of answers in favor of questions. Casey (2017) urges us to continue holding the space open to wonder about the lived experience of the edges of teaching while teaching in classrooms and performing teacher leadership. He encourages, “Our descriptive task is to let the edges of things appear and call to us, move and affect us—from within their own dense nexus, their own ways of being implicated in the interworlds we inhabit with them” (p. 316). A way in to letting the edges appear as they truly are is to name a place where a boundary seems to exist and then put it into conversation with the lived experience.

Classroom territory. The classroom, i.e., whatever defined virtual or physical space in which learning is occurring, is one boundary-defined space in a teacher’s school-world. How might teachers experience crossing it to explore, as a “teacher leader,” the larger field of education in which the classroom is built? Being “in the classroom” is the most obvious way to tell if someone is a teacher. It is a convenient marker in a fast-paced, heavily populated field. Anyone, whether she has developed “teacher sense” or not, can spot a being who is in the world as a teacher

(putting aside for a moment those who work as teachers without truly teaching) by looking at who is in charge of teaching thirty children at a time.

Classrooms are significant, even sacred, spaces for teachers. Classrooms take many forms, for any space lived as a learning space can become a classroom.

Classrooms are pedagogical homes where beings as teachers and as students present themselves as such to each other and to the world. It is no coincidence that, “I am leaving the classroom,” is a form of synecdoche teachers use to announce they are taking a job other than Teacher, including some traditional teacher leadership roles. Seamon (2018) invokes Casey to observe the significance of place in general, which is applicable to how teachers come to be in classroom spaces:

As Casey (2009, p. 14) declares, “to be is to be in place.” If this contention is true, then life does indeed take place. . . . From a phenomenological perspective, one can define place as *any environmental locus that gathers human experiences, actions, and meanings spatially and temporally*. (p. 2)

Classrooms are not merely rooms in buildings. They gather teaching and learning to them as “space[s] that [are] supposed to condense and defend intimacy” (Bachelard, 1964/1994, p. 48). They are distinct places with boundaries in the field of education, acknowledged by introductory phrases such as, “I am still in the classroom,” or “I am no longer in the classroom,” or “I am out of the classroom part-time but still teach some classes to keep a toe in [or one foot in the door].”

Leaving the classroom is like crossing a threshold into a new territory. For Heidegger, thresholds are boundaries that beckon us to pass through them. When I dwell in the classroom, everything outside is not the classroom or not my classroom. The lived experience of the teacher leaders discussed above who still teach is that they can expand and cross that threshold many times over, because the porch light is

always on for their return to their pedagogical home. They remain teachers to others because they have classrooms to go home to. What is the experience like for teachers who move away from home to take on roles outside of the classroom? Before, they are clearly visible in school-worlds as teachers; after, they are not likely to be seen as teachers immediately or at all. The classroom door is a threshold opening on to new pedagogical landscapes and a boundary line for ready-identity as a teacher.

A lived contradiction in the themes, when they are viewed anew with the question of classroom spaces, is that pedagogy pulls teachers to classrooms where teaching and learning happen and pulls them out of classrooms to see the needs outside and around it. Our systems call teachers who see those needs and cross classroom thresholds either “teacher leaders” or “leaders.” If that person retains close ties to the classroom by teaching a class or two or being in a temporary out-of-classroom position, then the system sees him or her as a “teacher leader.” Phenomenologically we might say a teacher can travel far and wide beyond the classroom threshold and still be at home in the classroom, still *be* a teacher in the ways the themes presented in this study describe, through their pedagogical body, calling, senses, and relationships. A lived question of pedagogical place and a practical question of daily work-worlds emerges: For how far and how long can a teacher travel—through leadership spaces such as classrooms, front offices, universities, or unions—and still be *from her classroom home*?

Casey’s (2017) phenomenological exploration of edges and limits is illuminating when it comes to questions about professional boundaries, particularly the ones before us about how teachers live both the boundaries of classrooms and the

definitional boundaries between teaching and teacher leadership. Both edges and limits mark where one physical, conceptual, experiential, or spatial surface—like a profession such as teaching or space such as teacher leadership—ends and another begins; however, they are distinct phenomena. He explains, “Edges are parts of parts of parts. . . . Limits, in contrast, concern wholes, that is, the formal totalities to which they belong” (p. 53). Spaces with edges exist within much larger spaces that have limits. Limits can be difficult to fathom, because they “are forever beyond ‘the bounds of sense,’ whereas edges emerge from within these bounds and help to concretize and complicate what appears there, even as they also mark its very evanescence” (p. 56). Classrooms, front offices, cafeterias, elementary schools, graduate school hallways, and many, many other edged spaces are within the limits of the field of education.

Those spaces allow us to make something of our educational endeavors, because we know ourselves when we can place ourselves in them.

Casey further expounds on the connections among limits, edges, and identity:

Limits belong to the *being* of a given phenomenon—to its very identity, status, or definition. As encountered, they are always already established, laid down; once established, they hold their position until replaced by another limit, one that claims to be more accurate or that meets other identifiable needs. . . . Edges, in contrast, are inherently capable of alteration, and often call for that expressly. At one level, they change because the very terms by which they are defined may be modified. . . . Indeed, the very edges of my personal identity can be altered. (p. 48)

Put to teaching, what, or where, is the limit of *being a teacher*? And how do classroom edges—or “edge-worlds” (Casey, 2017, p. 316) invite us to listen to those edges to understand them as they are lived, rather than how they appear under the “bearing of our words onto [them]” (p. 316)?

The many edge-worlds of teaching. Classrooms are not the only edge-worlds that belong to teaching, and these edged “things, events, and places show themselves to be complicitous with each other thanks to their interconnective edges” (Casey, 2017, p. 92). The patterns of these connections “have everything to do with how we experience the world and how we live our lives” (p. 92). School systems today would define certain edge-worlds as belonging to teacher leadership (e.g., department chair, instructional coach, informally leading instructional improvement from within the classroom), others to teaching (e.g., classroom instruction, discussing student data within teams), and others to leadership (e.g., principal, district curriculum supervisor, state education agency deputy). Phenomenologically, the teachers in this study experience the edges of workworlds as *part of teaching*. Put another way, even the spaces their districts or they call teacher leadership are lived as edge-worlds within the limits of teaching.

These various planes and edge-worlds of teaching and education interact in ways the humble Flatland resident begins to sense when he invokes the many higher dimensions that he knows interact with his own two-dimensional world. The teachers in this study also sense the patterns and play at the edges of classroom and other pedagogical spaces. Chris, for example, moves from edge-world to edge-world, never once surrendering his teacher-ness. Pedagogical limbo comes forth in the themes as a way of describing what those transition periods between and among edge-worlds are like. From the Latin *limbus* meaning “edge” or “border” (Harper, 2018), limbo is not only a place where one hangs between possibilities, but it is also a state of living on an edge or among edges of worlds one can inhabit. Where the edges touch, Chris

discovers “ever new channels” (Casey, 2017, p. 130) and new possibilities as he travels in response to the pedagogical call he follows. Significantly, Tanya wonders and worries if she will “run out of space.” She worries she is approaching the limits of pedagogy. As open, as out of our grasp, and as vast as spaces bound by horizons or untouchable limits can be, limits can also be strongly felt when they are “absorbed or imposed” (Casey, 2017, p. 212), such as culture or gender norms or professional expectations of what teachers should do or teacher leaders are permitted to do. Ambereen experiences limits when others’ ethnic, religious, or gender biases and prejudices restrict her access to new edge-worlds. Limits, especially conceptual ones, can be rigid.

Another dimension of how edges and limits are lived, especially in this professional context, is when an edge is mistaken for a limit. I find myself imagining a walk in a wide-open field. Even if my eyes were closed, I could feel the endless space between me and the horizon. Walking carefully along, my senses of hearing, sight, and touch are heightened. Unexpectedly my foot tentatively reaches out and finds a drop-off too large to cross. In that moment, the territory ends for me. I have reached the limit of where I can go. I retain my sense that the territory goes on and on beyond the cavern, though, and depending on my mood I could either find that perception frustrating or inspiring. Everything changes if, I open my eyes, look to the side, and see a bridge welcoming me to cross and continue. I am no longer at a limit; it is simply the edge of one side that beckons me to continue. “As you were,” the bridge says. How do teachers experience edges and limits? Do they experience transitions as invitations to continue being who they are?

Putting teachers into place. Seamon (2018) explains, “A thing is ‘thus’ in a context, and from that context, it derives the power to assert itself. . . . Identity includes being in one’s place” (p. 73). A teacher with his own classroom can always assert himself as a teacher, or, rather, the classroom asserts “Teacher” on his behalf. But when teachers-called-teacher-leaders feel pedagogy’s call to travel, they might wonder if the name “teacher” or “teacher leader” or “leader” will be affixed to them. If “who we are is partly where we are” (Seamon, 2018, p. 74), and if our system says teachers are teachers only when they have their own classrooms, then the classroom edge can be lived as the limit of being-a-teacher. On the other side of that limit they are being-a-teacher-leader, being-a-leader, being-a-researcher, being-a-former-teacher, or any number of other roles.

Living a crossable edge as if it were a limit shows itself in research literature, too. Many studies observe that teachers who take on roles and responsibilities for pedagogical actors and spaces other than their own classrooms often eschew or even struggle against being called a teacher leader, even when they have performed tasks the researchers code as leadership (e.g., Angelle & DeHart, 2011; Carver, 2016; Hunzicker, 2017; Lieberman & Friedrich, 2010b; Little, 1995; Mangin & Dunsmore, 2013). How do teachers live definitional boundaries, i.e., *teachers* dwell in classrooms, *teacher leaders* traverse multiple worlds while still teaching in the classroom (Wenner & Campbell, 2016), and *leaders* dwell in educational worlds outside of classrooms? How do teachers experience being put into their place?

Evening out differences. When teachers experience the classroom as the limit of being a teacher, they try to even out the differences between the teachers who

visibly dwell in classrooms and those who now travel between and among other education spaces or edge-worlds. Rose asserts, “I am not the leader.” Michelle, Chris, Tanya, Dolly, and Ambereen all say they are not better, or higher, than anyone else. Education gives “leaderly” spaces more power, so literature often ascribes such efforts to reduce their own standing or for teachers to disregard the authority of other teachers to the egalitarian nature of teaching. Phenomenologically, teachers living at the edge, or over the classroom edge, are trying to signal they are “from the classroom” even if they do not live there full time. Heidegger (1962/2008) explains that when one’s concern is taken hold of with others, “there is constant care as to the way one differs from them” and that one of the ways beings respond is to “even out” the differences, because “the care about this distance between them is disturbing to Being-with-one-another” (pp. 163-164). Metaphors such as “crabs in a bucket,” where crabs pull down others who are trying to climb out, or “tall poppy syndrome,” in which the poppies that grow the tallest are mowed down, all point toward teachers-called-teacher-leaders avoiding the power of worlds outside the classroom in order to show they are still at home in classrooms. Those “syndromes”—a word connoting a pattern of behavior at best and disease or disorder at worst—are ways teachers protect the togetherness that characterizes the root of their being. Being called by pedagogy requires action-oriented togetherness; teacher sense brings about communal togetherness; professional teachership requires collegial togetherness.

The mythological divide. Hunzicker (2017) writes of a subset of teachers in a study: “It is also possible that these four teachers [who did not fully identify themselves as leaders] embraced what Carver (2016) called the teacher versus leader

myth; the belief that teacher leadership requires an either/or choice between teaching and leading” (p. 19). Embracing is an act of taking something or someone into one’s arms or willingly accepting an idea, so this hypothesis ascribes full agency to the teacher. In choosing to embrace this mythological belief, teachers would become the ones who carry the blame for perpetuating a divide that in theory does not have to be true. They would be entirely responsible for their own dilemma and confusion. Myths, however, are transmitted in ways that often go undetected until a paradigm shift makes them visible or until “experiences . . . register the hidden costs of discursive practices on . . . everyday lives” (Stone-Mediatore, 2003, p. 120). If teachers act on the basis of a myth, it is likely because the myth has already been acting on them.

Teachers are told they can “lead without leaving” the classroom (e.g., Denver Public Schools, 2019). This statement is meant to be motivational, but in arguing against the idea that leadership must be outside the classroom, it acknowledges the presence of the pervasive myth that leading and teaching belong to different worlds. I have heard teachers who are currently in the classroom call those who take leadership roles “has-been teachers.” Even the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (2018), which includes advocacy, formal leadership, and informal leadership in its definitions of what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do, calls it “borrowing a classroom” when a National Board Certified Teacher (NBCT), who is now in a teacher leadership or leadership role, has to video herself teaching someone else’s class for the required evidence to renew the certification. While the NBCT is in a classroom, it does not belong to her. She must give it back

and return to her world beyond the classroom's edge. Policymakers and school district leaders will also say soundly that some teachers want to remain "in the classroom, and that is okay." They are H.O.T.: happy only teaching. On the other hand, teachers hear this message: "Teachers also need to believe they can become leaders" (Carver, 2016, p. 177). Language meant to empower subtly conveys the message that "leader" is something teachers' beings turn into. A new name is a new place, and a new place is a new way of asserting oneself—as a leader, not as a teacher—on the edge-worlds that make up the field of education.

Inner conflict at the classroom edge-as-limit. How do teachers experience life at the limit of teaching, where they feel the myth of the splits among teacher, teacher leader, and leader spaces? Storm (2016) stitches the various parts of himself together with hyphens. He is a "Teacher-Researcher-Leader" and writes a defense of how one person can—and should—occupy all of those spaces *as a teacher*. The resistance or surprise he experiences when he crosses into researcher and leader territories motivates him. Melville (2016) also feels split. She describes what her "teacher self" does (p. 54) and what her "teacher leader self" does (p. 55), and the two selves are not always allowed to be the same, based on the rules of the space set by her school. At the time of this study, Ambereen stands in her classroom, at the threshold, about to step over it and, she predicts, never return to a classroom as the teacher of record. She still feels like a teacher in the core of her being; she is about to take on a role that could be considered teacher leadership, because she has proven herself in the classroom and will be with teachers; but she is out of the classroom so she wonders if she has to call herself a leader, not a teacher leader. She grapples with

what the mythical and pervasive language around her wants to make of her, and how it wants to place her:

I realized, this is just my job as a teacher, but I do all of these things. It was beyond a classroom. The experiences I've had outside the classroom, in the way I advocate for my students where I grow, I developed myself as a teacher. I have all these experiences that have shaped me as a leader. Is that when you become a teacher in a sense? A teacher leader? Are you not a teacher leader if you don't have these outside experiences, or these outside leadership experiences, or if the only thing you do is just teach all day? Maybe you are leading your students. You are working with your students, so you are leading them. That's what makes you a teacher leader in a sense. I don't know. I've been thinking about this, like the definition of a teacher leader, what that means. I think people use it in so many different ways. I don't know. It sometimes even becomes, like not a cliché, but there's a stereotype with the term teacher leader. I don't know. You're so much more than just that role. It's really such a struggle, I think, to understand that. I don't know.

Ambereen sorts through what she will consider herself to be and what others will consider her to be as they watch her move from one edge-world to another.

The poet Villanueva (2016) evokes the experience of Ambereen's onlookers as they wonder what will become of her, too:

Consider now the three, or is it four figures
in Alberto Valdés's *Untitled* (ca. 1965).
They are wayward energy, moving right
to left (the right one more sensuous than the rest)
about to dive
into the deep-blue waiting—call it the unknown.
I'd like to be there when they meet that blue abyss
head on.
Will they keep their shape, I wonder,
or break up and rearrange themselves
into a brighter, more memorable pose
... into a bigger elemental thing?

I'm really asking this:
When they run into the landscape of blue,
will these figures lose their logic of luster?
Will they lose their lucid argument of color,
their accumulated wealth of geometry?
Will they still engage the entire me,

hold me,
keep me mesmerized?

Ambereen's teacher sense perceives teacher colleagues and students wondering if her sense-ability and the "accumulated wealth of geometry" that is her pedagogical body of knowledge will hold outside of the classroom when she dives into her new role—if she will still see teachers and students in their entirety, hold and care for them. All the while, she is energized and compelled to dive, explore, and become "a bigger elemental thing" who can shape pedagogy for more and more teachers and students.

This narrative of lived conflict shows up in blogs for *Education Week*, too. Jamie Barnes (2018) writes one titled, "I'm Leaving the Classroom for Leadership. And I've Never Felt More Internal Conflict." Jamie always wanted to be a teacher, and then one day he changes:

I made a choice that will take me off this path that I've long thought I was destined to follow. I've decided to leave the classroom and become an instructional coach. . . . I worry I'll lose the teacher identity that is so important to me. . . . Through coaching [colleagues] I felt the slight tug beyond the classroom. I was feeling pulled to something new that had captivated me. I wanted to support teachers.

For Jamie, the instructional coach world is different than the teacher world. He experiences the call of pedagogy when his teacher sense brings the needs of the teachers around him into focus; yet, the system around him makes him feel like he is stepping away from his destiny as a teacher, that his calling is a calling beyond a teacherly one. Instructional coaches help teachers and can be supremely fulfilled. They help others "learn the art and craft that is teaching." But, Jamie says, "the decision to leave the classroom was the hardest decision that I've had to make thus far in my life (and I feel certain that's not hyperbole)" (Barnes, 2018). He goes on to

say he feels like he “achieved” his dream of being a teacher and is now “moving on to a new one.” Teaching stops. Leading begins. Other teachers connect the two worlds with a statement such as this one: “I can reach more students this way, by becoming a principal [or other role]” (Ambereen, Chris, Michelle). This statement announces: My pedagogical body might physically dwell in educational spaces other than classrooms, but I am from the classroom, at home there, and remain connected to it in sense and intention; I am a teacher. Might teaching itself expand into teachership so teachers like Jamie can evolve and follow pedagogy’s call into leadership *as teachers*?

In Chapter One, I relived the moment in my career when I asked myself an important question. When I left the classroom for teacher leadership, research, and other roles, I asked if I was unsettled because I wanted to “move in directions teaching would not let me go.” Like Jamie and Ambereen I felt my teacher self wanting to go one way, but my classroom—the place in which everyone automatically knew I was a teacher—was in the other direction. In this new between, I now find myself realizing I moved in directions teaching and pedagogy’s call wanted me to go so I could take care of teachers. Pedagogy only ever needed me to become more and more of a teacher *in my being*, no matter what role I held. However, the norms and systems around me told me those were places beyond classrooms that people-who-used-to-be-teachers could go. I would have to become something else, beyond the limit of teaching.

Pushing the Limits of the Field of Teaching

Casey (2017) offers a way forward: “We must learn to question the presumed primacy of formally precise or measurably exact edges, however necessary such

edges may be in certain contexts” (p. 316). Let us hold open a space in which dwelling in the classroom is not *the lived limit* of being a teacher and that teacher leadership does not require teachers to see themselves *as leaders*. “More open terrain” lies just beyond traditional boundaries “in which all customary views are confined” (Heidegger, 1977/2008g, p. 378). What if, phenomenologically, belonging to a classroom is one edge-world within a much larger *teaching landscape* instead of a limit marking the difference between a teacher landscape and a teacher leadership landscape? What if out-of-classroom roles such as teaching fellow, instructional coach, or even teacher-now-principal were worlds within the teaching landscape where teachers could be at home as teachers? What new possibilities emerge if we imagine the classroom lived by teachers as one edge of many in a much larger space teachers can travel *as teachers*, the limits of which we cannot yet sense? How would teachers then experience the messages transmitted through infrastructure, policies, professional culture, and teacher education?

Moving Forward (or Whichever Way): Teachers Finding Their Own Places in a Wide-Open Field

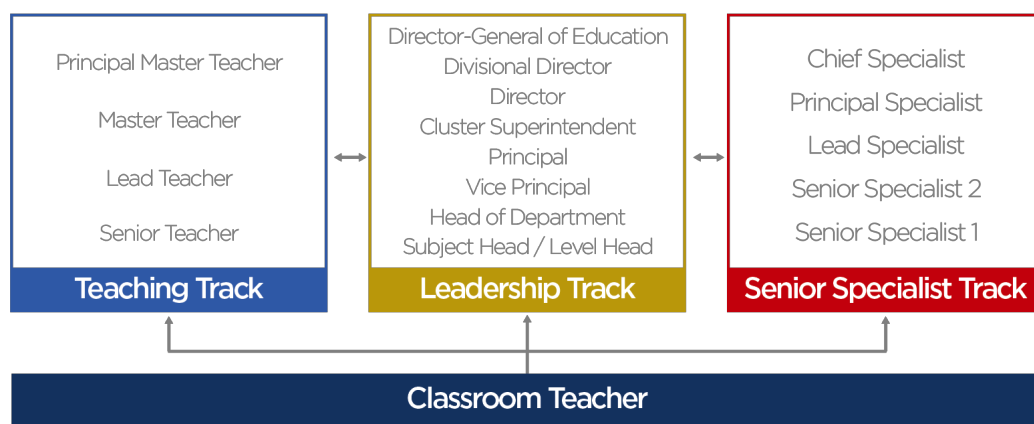
Hermeneutic phenomenology derives its usefulness in a human institution like teaching by applying insights about the lived experiences to how we, as beings rooted in care, interact with others and influence the atmosphere in which pedagogy happens. The need to apply those insights would be pressing if this particular phenomenon was experienced by a handful of teachers, but the sheer scope makes the need time sensitive and overwhelming. Teacher leadership legislation and programs affect the vast majority of teachers. There are 30 states that allow teachers to advance

beyond a standards professional license; 22 offer a teacher leadership license or endorsement; 17 states have adopted teacher leader standards; 13 have the role of teacher leader in statute or regulation; 24 states provide formal supports or incentives to teacher leaders (Education Commission of the States, 2018). Systems must provide the space for its actors to understand where 3.5 million teachers are coming from and design career progressions that resonate with who they are and how they want to travel throughout the field of education.

Cartography of Teachers' Careers

A map tells you where you've been, where you are, and where you're going—in a sense it's three tenses in one. (Greenaway, 1979)

Singapore resolves, or at least ameliorates, the inner conflict at the borders between teaching, teaching leadership, and leadership by purposefully constructing a system and map in which everyone, including the Director-General of Education for all of Singapore, begins as a teacher (Yang, 2018).



Source: Singapore Ministry of Education

During an international benchmarking trip I participated in with the National Center on Education and the Economy in February 2018 (Williams-Kief, 2018), I heard teachers, lead teachers, master teachers, subject heads, heads of department,

principals, superintendents, specialists (curriculum supervisors and researchers), and even the director-general of education introduce themselves. Every single educator began the same way: “I am a trained teacher.” They all rooted their expertise in teaching. One superintendent said, “Because I am a teacher like the teachers and principals I support, I have an understanding of what they need.” That superintendent, using the experiential language of this study, continues to use and hone the teacher sense she developed earlier in her career.

Yang’s (2018) first-person account of his own career progress in Singapore is noticeably absent the dichotomous language that emerges in this study and in the hallways of American schools. Rather than call himself a teacher when he was in the classroom, a teacher leader or leader when he took on roles with responsibilities beyond classroom teaching, and a leader when he was not directly associated with the classroom, he says it is all part of his “career as a teacher.” He explains that the leadership track “provides opportunities *for teachers* [emphasis added].” The “teaching track” is not the “teacher track.” All of the tracks are technically teacher tracks. During his career he moved, as a teacher, from the teaching track, to the leadership track, and then back to the teaching track, all of which were lateral moves. At no time was he discouraged “or made to feel like [he] was making a wrong choice.”

Singapore’s system is, of course, not perfect. The language of administration, seen in Yang’s blog, is still attached to principals (although some schools appoint a vice principal who operates as a chief operation officer so the principal can focus on instructional leadership), but everyone moves through and across teaching, teacher

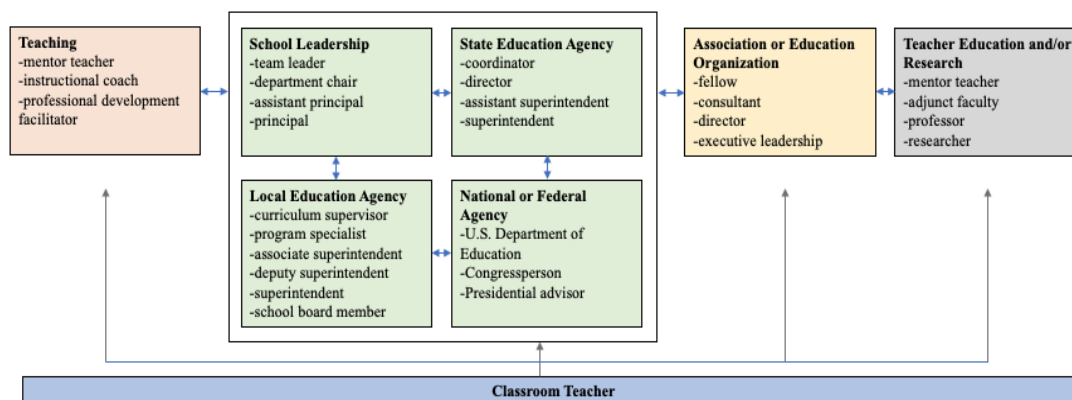
leadership, and leadership roles as they are called to do so *as teachers*. Because everyone begins as a teacher and attains the same credentials, there is no confusion over who counts as a teacher or has the right to claim being a teacher. A teacher can travel from the classroom into other roles for professional learning or a full-time placement, and everyone still recognizes that educator as a traveling teacher; situatedness in a classroom is not a necessary identity marker to announce oneself as a teacher. The limits of teachership are broader, encompassing the entire career ladder and all the edge-worlds therein.

The purpose of describing in some detail what I witnessed in Singapore is not to argue that the United States should—or could—copy their relatively young system. For one, they are the size of one mid-size American school district. The purpose is to open possibilities. It is so easy to allow obstacles to stunt brainstorming even before they have the chance to obstruct implementation. Singapore shows it is possible to construct a system that centers the way teachers move through it; human resources and the gears of their bureaucracy center on accurately predicting which teachers will be out for months for professional learning or away for one to three years for a rotation in another school, role, agency, or track. That possibility is an important reminder, because teacher experience tends to reside in a blind spot in American research and schools. The most recent comprehensive review of teacher leadership literature directly admits:

One often-underreported outcome of teacher leadership is the effect it has on those taking up the roles. . . . In fact, we did not originally intend to consider this outcome either, until it became apparent in the articles we reviewed that this might be an important component of supporting teacher leaders. (Wenner & Campbell, 2016, p. 29)

Singapore offers a contrasting vision in which teachers are purposefully and unapologetically foregrounded, because “schools should be responsive to teachers, too” (Noddings, 2005, p. xviii). In Singapore we can also see a system in which teachers not only retain their teacherness, but also purposefully grow their teachership in whatever roles pedagogy needs them to play.

Today, depictions of teacher career trajectories in the United States tend to proceed linearly, from left to right: Preservice to early career stages to professional or expert stages to advanced tracks such as teacher leadership or school leadership. Changing the visuals we use to frame our understanding of teachers’ careers from a one-dimensional continuous conveyor belt to one of expansion and choice could open new ways of thinking. Borrowing Singapore’s depiction of possible lateral moves, we could begin to show the possible moves a teacher could make in an open field of education, leveraging moves they already make today.



The edges of the diagrams we use to depict teaching careers and teacher leadership place visual and conceptual limits on our lived understandings of where teachers travel as teachers. New concept maps can expand the territory teachers have to explore within their teaching careers. The diagram above does not attempt to

catalog all of the roles one teacher might fill in education, and it includes some that are debatable, but it is designed to incorporate roles beyond those typically included in teacher leadership diagrams in order to test accepted boundary lines.

Phenomenologically speaking, a teacher is someone who is first and foremost at home in the classroom, that is, in the pedagogical situation between teacher and student. Teachers whose expertise has grown such that their senses accurately perceive needs outside, around, and possibly related to their own classrooms might be living in the classroom at any given time or might be travelling to other worlds in service of pedagogy. New questions and possibilities announce themselves for various areas of the field of education if teacher identity were to travel with the teacher, not as luggage that gets stowed until it comes in handy but as the passport everyone sees and registers.

Hosting Teachers on Their Journeys through Teachership

Inspired by this real-life contemporary system, I am called to move forward from this study by the question in Stafford's (1977) "Reporting Back:" "Is there a way to walk that living has obscured? / (Our feet are trying to remember some path we are walking toward.)" What new possibilities reside in our schools if we act based on deeper understandings of teachers' experiences? The word "teachership" disrupts what we think we know. It shakes up the given language that keeps us stuck in seeing teacher leadership confined to roles or stances. New language of teachership places teacher leadership in teachers' movements between and among roles or callings, not adhered to particular classrooms, roles, or career stages. Teachership calls on us to facilitate that movement. What possibilities are released when new language escorts

us into new spaces? Just as the name “teacher leadership” invited education to wonder about teacher career growth (but with side effects), “teachership” can now liberate us into new questions and ways forward that resonate with the expanding vision and sense-making that propel teachers onward.

How do we start teachers on their journey? Developing what van Manen calls “student sense” is at the heart of what teacher preparation aims to do. New teachers learn to register themselves and their bodies in pedagogical spaces as teachers and then learn to tune into children-as-students (Sun & van Es, 2015; Talanquer, Tomanek, & Novodvorsky, 2013). Teachers must learn to wonder about students, their backgrounds, their strengths, their emotions, their very beings. An expanded vision of teachership could create new spaces in teacher education to show preservice teachers that after or with student sense comes teacher sense. Aspiring teachers could be shown how all the edge-worlds in the field of education relate to one another so that when aspiring teachers first find themselves in schools, they can develop sooner their sense of the atmosphere in which pedagogy happens.

At the start of any journey, knowledgeable guides are lifelines. They help us pack, anticipate challenges, and envision what might await us. Teacher educators and mentor teachers could imagine that the purpose of their guidance of preservice teachers is to go beyond bringing classroom practice into focus. They could guide preservice teachers into emerging awareness of how teachers interact with one another, how they “read” each other and meet each other’s needs, how they perceive aspects of the educational atmosphere that affect pedagogy, and how they go about moving in response to what they perceive and are drawn by. For example, mentors

and mentees can discuss observations of a department meeting or teacher-to-teacher exchange in the planning area just as they would an instance of classroom instruction. Granted, preservice teachers are still developing the foundational body of knowledge and student sense necessary to have mature teacher sense; however, making teacher sense part of their vision of how their career will unfold will begin to create space in their bodies of knowledge and make them more sensitive to opportunities when they arise, and perhaps sooner than otherwise.

Methods professors, mentor teachers, and internship supervisors can model their own professional visions and how their own pedagogical bodies of knowledge enable them to have those visions—just as they would model teaching methods. Experiencing teaching early on as a profession of journey, movement, and travel within and among edge-worlds could help preservice teachers feel more comfortable changing roles and situations during their careers. They could see how teachers take up roles in many spaces, to include not only schools but also places like teacher education and central offices. They could understand how national, state, and local policy efforts interlock, trickle down to and are affected by teaching and learning work in classrooms. Having guides who can raise preservice teachers' sensory awareness can set them up for being able to attend to their own wellbeing and the wellbeing of students, teachers, schools, and pedagogy (Cherkowski, 2018; Noddings, 2005).

How might schools receive new teachers? Schools welcome new teachers every year: both teachers who are new to the profession and experienced teachers who are new to the school. New teachers will experience what it is like for the first

time to feel at home in a school as a teacher. They will get to know the school, its atmosphere, their colleagues, and the children. They will get to know themselves as teachers. Experienced teachers feel at home in schools in general but will not yet have the lay of the land of this school. Both early career and experienced teachers will enter the world of this school as visitors. How can the school and its inhabitants welcome them so they can be in the space fully? How can the school help them exercise their bodies of knowledge?

There is pedagogical technique and practical know-how involved in entering any new school as a teacher, but we must also support teachers authentically and care-fully. Beyond an orientation program to policies, programs, and expectations, induction programs could attend to what it means *to be* a teacher *here*, with *these students*, and *these colleagues*, in *this community*. One particular teacher leadership program helps teachers orient themselves while being grounded in practical and experiential knowledge. As such its design could be used to see new possibilities for welcoming teachers new to teaching or only new to the school. The Academy, as described by Carver (2016), is supported by school districts, community college, and regional centers. The program situates the practical offerings (e.g., how to design agendas and lead professional learning sessions) in the experience of expanding professional vision and developing “greater awareness of leadership needs and opportunities outside the classroom” (p. 168). One participant shared, “It opened up a door that I didn’t know about, and it made me realize that ‘Wow. . . This is where I could go’” (p. 168).

The four questions that anchor the Academy's curriculum resonate with the themes that emerged in this study: Who am I (a question of being and one's body of knowledge)? Where am I (a question of place, situation, and identity)? How do I lead (a question of what it means to be led by a need in relationship with others)? What can I do (a question of what one is called by)? This program centers teachers, their experience, and their growing body of knowledge and sensory powers, and even affected one participant's "entire being" (p. 168). Any effort to welcome teachers and make them feel at home could center teachers on those questions of being, because any new teacher has to learn who they are *there*. From there, teachers have the potential to affect the wellbeing of those in pedagogy's care and the freedom to put themselves in the role that will let them (Cherkowski, 2018).

How can we welcome traveling teachers to their destinations? The edge-worlds teachers travel to and from include classrooms and many other worlds. The insights from the lived experience of teacher leadership lead me to imagine a system that plans for and values teacher movement into and through different roles. It pulses with the belief that teachers' pedagogical vision expands and that it is the system's job to let them get up close and personal with whatever they need to see in order to answer their calling. The system that rewards teachers for developing the skills and expertise schools need and teachers crave will go beyond accommodating teacher career growth and movement. It will assume it is likely, plan for it, and welcome expertise that crosses role boundaries. Pedagogical moments between teachers and students will be the better for it.

How or why might teachers travel, and how might we ease their inner conflict at the edges of various worlds? We might encourage all teachers who are interested—not just a very small number—to have a rotation as an instructional coach, for example, and then count that experience in their salaries or as necessary experience for other roles in the system. If a teacher becomes interested in curriculum development, he could spend one year in the central office working with a curriculum supervisor. In Singapore, teachers and principals explained to me that the only way to become lead teachers or department heads or principals is to have a placement teaching high-needs students; the only way to become a mentor teacher is to be judged by principals and other school leaders (teachers who are department heads or mentor teachers) to be a very skilled teacher with dispositions necessary for supporting new teachers. Any master teacher will have been judged to be an effective mentor teacher and teaching expert in a subject matter or grade, and so on. Language of career growth would not divide the classroom from all other spaces or teaching from leading. In other words, when a teacher travels, the various edge-worlds are connected to each other and value the experience the teacher carries with him or herself. The traveler does not stop and start new identities with every border crossing.

If we continue to ask what new possibilities are released, then we see schools and roles in other “tracks” could begin to explore how to leverage the expertise teachers bring with them to those roles from other experiences—including learning how to make room for the expertise teachers bring back to the classroom after they take on work in administration, research, or teacher preparation. Teacher education and professional learning offered by associations, universities, districts, and other

organizations would consider how to support teachers in meeting state- and professionally-issued benchmarks throughout their careers. The programs to prepare teachers for principalships, research, mentor teaching, and the like would not be conversion therapy that tries to turn teachers into some entirely new identity that leaves teacher sensibilities behind; they would support teachers as teachers who need additional skills, knowledge, and new senses to take on expanded responsibilities. Professional associations, universities, or other teacher education organizations could generate new offerings for teachers, including those who cross into state, national or association leadership. Teachers who work in those worlds can be engaged to teach their fellow teachers how to make sense of it. Teacher movement—from answering new calls from within the classroom to becoming a chief state school officer—would be the expected norm, not the exception for the few.

In all cases, professional learning experiences and program infrastructure must welcome teachers as teachers and make room for their experiences. Education as a human institution needs us to remember “we are committed to responsiveness; that is, we must listen to others and try to address their legitimate expressed needs” (Noddings, 2005, p. xv). Nel Noddings expresses the crux of this principle—that pedagogy, as more than technique, is peopled and lived—when she explains the central idea of her ethic of caring: “The living other is more important than any theory” (p. xix). Teacher leaders who are attuned to pedagogy ask questions about and are sensitive to the constellation of teachers, students, spaces, and situations that allow pedagogy’s presence to be felt. Tanya is drawn to being a team leader by asking, “How can we be better teachers? How can we help our students learn? How

can I be a part of what direction our school is taking?” The teacher leader sees and then cannot turn away from the whole of pedagogy, the ongoing transformation of students and teachers both. Caretakers of the edge-worlds in the field of education must also see and turn towards the legitimate expressed needs of teachers. Together, they can nurture and lovingly defend pedagogy.

Continuing Questions for Systems and People Who Support Teachers

I am struck by a tension that announces itself in the space between the lived experience and language in the everyday world of education. Because teacher quality is linked to outcomes for students, current rhetoric is about “keeping good teachers in the classroom.” The plus side of this focus is that it shines a spotlight on undesirable or unsafe working conditions and recognizes principals for the profound influence they have on their schools. There is a downside of this rhetoric, which is that it signals to experienced teachers who leave the classroom to pursue a pedagogical calling that they are somehow abandoning the cause. The language of teachership calls us to realize that keeping good teachers in the classroom does not have to confine experienced teachers, or teacher identity, to classrooms. It calls us to wonder instead why we let anyone who is not a “good teacher” be in our children’s classrooms at all, or, put another way, wonder how we can ensure every teacher in the classroom is “good.” Then teacher movement becomes less threatening. Our profession, for now, has to live in the tension of wanting to keep true teachers in the classroom and simultaneously supporting the true teachers who are traveling to and from edge-worlds in service of teachers and students.

One way to reside in this tension, which is what phenomenology asks us to do, is to wonder what would happen if we released practicing teachers from the responsibility of staying to alleviate recruitment and preparation challenges. Supporting the movement of experienced teachers might incentivize people to become teachers, so they can fill the classrooms once others move. This freedom might also entice teachers to remain in or return to the classroom, because they would be free to identify and meet student or teacher needs—and fully be themselves—while there. This is not to say we should throw our arms up to all teacher attrition and pretend it is all a positive indicator of teacher professional freedom. That teachers have no other choice but to leave because of untenable working conditions and under-preparation is not acceptable; any profession has a responsibility to ensure consistent, high quality practice (Thorpe, 2014). Perhaps phenomenology calls us to wonder if part of ensuring consistent, high quality practice is to hold open the space so teachers can travel.

Ensuring safe travel conditions and freedom for career growth opens new questions about teacher experience. Questions phenomenology can answer would allow us to uncover more of the meaning that resides in teacher experience of teacher leadership and career growth, and those questions should not be afterthoughts. What is the experience of teacher leadership as a person of color and/or of a particular religion, gender, ethnicity, or sexuality? What is a teacher's experience of being the-one-cared-for in a teacher-teacher relationship? What is a teacher's experience of being a teacher in roles other than classroom teaching? How do those who are not teachers experience working with teachers who are in educational leadership roles?

What is the experience of being teacher in non-classroom edge-worlds and feeling like one's student sense or teacher sense is dulling? If teachers can experience coming fully into their being as teachers, what is it like to experience un-becoming a teacher, or becoming someone else? These inquiries can lead to insights that shape teacher education and professional learning and kindle more sensitive awareness of how teachers experience various roles or situations within the field of education.

Another tension that announces itself is that this kind of flexibility for teachers is, in part, derived from having a strong, clear backbone of consistent expectations along the way in the system. How does a system allow for individualized pedagogical calls? States and professional organizations, for example, would have to re-decide which roles required which degrees, licenses, endorsements, and/or professional certifications and which organizations would be responsible for accountability. Certainly these efforts already exist in pockets. Consistency is key, though. For teachers to be recognized as teachers whether they are assigned to a classroom or not, there would have to be professional identity markers (such as degrees, licensure and board certification) universally known to and accepted by the public, teaching profession, and states. National Board Certification is one such marker that resonates with the teachers in the study who earned it and signals that the person who earns it is at home in the classroom, regardless of where he or she dwells at the moment.

The push to keep teachers in the classroom is seemingly at odds with the movement that resonates with their being—freedom to follow pedagogical callings from classroom edge-worlds or to and from others. The movement of millions of professionals would be at odds with bureaucratic systems in states that exist to track

teachers and ensure they are safe to practice. The closeness teachers feel with students and teachers is seemingly in tension with the physical distance that movement away from the classroom produces, even though that movement can be undertaken to positively affect them. Phenomenology asks us to reside in the tensions and not see the opposite sides as mutually exclusive. These tensions are between, places of possibility—as uncomfortable or confusing as they might feel at times—in which we can draw teachers and their experiences closer to us.

Finding My Own Way as a Teacher Called to Care for Other Teachers

This new between carves out its space with questions. To one side, I see the questions that first compelled me to ask about the lived experience of teacher leadership. To another, I see new questions I could only have asked as a result of this journey.

National Board Certification and My Call to Care

At the time I started to work at the National Board, I knew I was drawn to it because it was a home where I could take care of teachers, just as the classroom was a home where I could take care of students. Situated in the new between of this reflective space, I also recognize that I was attracted to the growth at the core of the National Board's being. The idea that teachers would begin their careers aiming towards accomplished practice, not just good-enough practice, is imbued with faith in teachers' pedagogical vision. Basing standards, assessment design and certification decisions entirely on the professional wisdom of teachers extends that vision farther to a place where teachers influence the wider field of education.

Currently, the National Board is redesigning the assessment and process by which National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) maintain their certificate in their original certificate area. In the past, if an NBCT was up for renewal but not teaching, the guidelines allow that teacher to “borrow” a classroom. Internal survey data and focus groups tell me that teachers who borrowed classrooms sometimes felt their experience and instruction were inauthentic. The students were not theirs, and that classroom was not where they lived. Other teachers, or sometimes the same teachers, would also report that going back into the classroom was intimidating but reminded them of who they are as teachers.

My own experience renewing my certification was not dissimilar. I remember standing in someone else’s classroom, self-consciously overthinking every gesture. Should I lean back on the desk? How do I move through these rows? How will the students interpret my distance or nearness, my gaze? My body had to relearn its contours against this new classroom space. The new Maintenance of Certification (MOC) will still honor the fact that teachers change roles while requiring evidence of classroom practice with students, but I wonder how the language of the instructions could go further to honor the expanding vision and movement in their careers. “Borrowing a classroom” feels like a concession and calls attention to the distance between the teacher and the classroom. Might there be other ways for teachers to show they are still at home in the classroom with teachers and students, no matter where their pedagogical vision and journeys have taken them?

As a continuation of an initial certification that so deeply resonates with me, Ambereen, Tanya, Dolly, and more than 100,000 other teachers, MOC must continue

to allow a teacher's authentic body of knowledge to announce itself. It can and should evolve with the teacher to allow that teacher's being—her place in the field of teaching and her relationships with teachers and students—to shine authentically. If the NBCT is a guest in the classroom world, let her be a guest and the kind of guest that only an accomplished teacher could be. If the NBCT is a classroom teacher, let him have options, too. His expanding professional vision might mean he wants to show he can model a lesson with a colleague's students or as a co-teacher with a pre-service teacher. MOC should center the teacher, professional learning, and the teacher's ability to instruct students, not any one particular classroom. After all, teachers travel.

My Journey as a Teacher through the Field of Education

I am struck by a revelation when I look back at the questions I asked in Chapter One about my decision to pursue teacher leadership options outside of the classroom. I asked: "Why was the teacher leadership that I experienced within school walls not enough to nourish the teacher within me? Did I start to drift within my teaching career because I neglected some fundamental aspect of myself or of what teaching required? Did I become unsettled because I wanted to move in directions that teaching would not let me go?" In these questions, I see an assumption, very deeply ingrained in me by the language that saturates my field, that being a teacher stops at classroom and school walls. Now, I wonder about the ability of teaching, as an existential mode of Being, to expand far past the limits I thought it had. I think teaching and a pedagogical call that singled me out is what carried me past the school

walls to new places and people where I could nurture pedagogy. Pedagogy singles each of us teachers out in its own way.

I now feel free to imagine where teaching will take me next, because I no longer feel like I left it behind. My teacherness and leadership—my teachership—resides in the journey itself and in the moves my pedagogical body makes. I am not technically employed as a teacher; but experientially, phenomenologically, I am employed in my very being-in-the-world as a teacher. This teacher-ness transcends roles, responsibilities, and school walls. It resides in teachership's call to care for pedagogy. Its foundations exist in the classrooms where I taught English language arts and honed my "child sense" of what mattered to children in my care in pedagogical moments. It exists in the schools and teacher gatherings where I honed my "teacher sense" of what mattered to teachers and what any given experience might mean to them. My teacher sense led me to places like the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards where I can help to shape the atmosphere in which teachers across the country work. I reside in and am propelled by my call to care for teachers. I consciously heighten my sensitivity to pedagogical possibilities in non-school spaces and across the distance between my location and schools. I move through offices, conference centers, board rooms, and the occasional classroom with my pedagogical body of knowledge. I live with teachers in nearness, authentically bound to them regardless of how physically far from me they are. Leaving the classroom for new teacher leadership opportunities did not strip me of my teacherness. I have not even approached the limit of my being as teacher. Teachership

is a wide-open field of many dimensions, and I have many more between to explore within the profession that continues to call me.

APPENDIX A: PARTICIPANT CHARACTERISTICS

	Amberreen	Chris	Dolly	Michelle	Rose	Tanya
	11 Years Experience	13 Years Experience	16 Years Experience	14 Years Experience	20 Years Experience	17 Years Experience
Ethnicity and Gender	Asian American, Female	Caucasian, Male	African American, Female	African American, Female	Caucasian, Female	Caucasian, Female
Content Area(s)	English language arts, Special education	Special education, Math, Science, K-8 General	English language arts	English language arts	Social studies, Technology, Library media	Library media
National Board Certified	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
School Districts^a		Northeast C				Northeast I Northeast J
	Mid-Atlantic A Mid-Atlantic B	Mid-Atlantic D	Mid-Atlantic G	Mid-Atlantic H	Mid-Atlantic H	Mid-Atlantic H
		Pacific E Pacific F				
School Types and Levels	rural	rural		suburban	suburban	rural suburban
	urban	urban	urban			
	high	elementary middle high	middle	middle high	high	elementary middle high
Formal Role(s) Other than Teacher	School and county union leader National Board candidate support provider Equity and diversity advocate	Student support coordinator Dean of students Department head Special education director Vice principal Evaluation team leader	Pre-service mentor teacher Department chair Professional learning leader	Assistant principal Department chair Team leader District lead mentor	District curriculum writer Instructional technology support Team leader National Board candidate support provider	Adjunct faculty School improvement team leader

^a Each unique district is indicated by a different letter.

APPENDIX B: LETTER OF INVITATION

Dear Participant:

Thank you for your interest in being part of my research process. The focus of the research is to deepen understandings of teachers' experiences of teacher leadership. To conduct this investigation, I require participants who are willing to engage in a series of activities over a three-month period that will take approximately fifteen hours. You should expect to:

- Participate in an initial conversation with me (lasting approximately one to two hours) on your experiences of teacher leadership.
- Engage in a written, reflective assignment based on our conversation.
- Participate in two group conversations with me and other study participants (lasting three to four hours each).
- Following each group conversation, participate in a one-on-one conversation with me on your experiences of the group conversation and teacher leadership (lasting thirty minutes to one hour each).
- Engage in a reflective assignment after each group conversation.
- If deemed necessary by participants, participate in a third group conversation and individual follow-up conversation.

Protecting your privacy, confidentiality, and identity to the greatest extent possible are paramount to me. To maintain your safety in the research process, I will do the following:

- All of the conversations will be audiotaped, transcribed, and forwarded to you for verification of the content and intention.
- When the research project has been completed, all audio files and transcripts will be destroyed.
- You will be referred to only by your first names or by a pseudonym.

Finally, your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You are under no obligation to participate, and you can end your participation at any time without penalty. You may also decline to answer any question I ask during our conversations. If the above is agreeable to you, you will be asked to sign and date a consent form at our first meeting. By signing this form, you are agreeing to participate in this research project. I look forward to working with you. If you have any questions, please contact me at [email address] or [phone number].

Sincerely,

Kristin Hamilton, Ph.D. Candidate

Teacher Education and Professional Development, University of Maryland

APPENDIX C: PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Project Title	Wording their own worlds: A phenomenological exploration of teachers' lived experiences of teacher leadership
Purpose of the Study	This research is being conducted by Kristin Hamilton at the University of Maryland, College Park, under the direction of Dr. Francine Hultgren. We are inviting you to participate in this research project because you have experiences as a teacher leader. The purpose of this research project is to investigate the human lived experience of teacher leadership by creating and analyzing descriptions of those experiences.
Procedures	The research process will take place over three months, and the procedures will involve three to four individual interviews (one-on-one) and two to three group interviews. There will be written reflection activities to do prior to each meeting and during each group interview. Written reflection activities done prior to group interviews will take approximately thirty minutes to complete, although individual completion times may vary. Kristin Hamilton will conduct the interviews at a time and location that is mutually convenient to the participant and to the investigator. Individual interviews should last about one hour. Group interviews will last three-four hours. Interviews will be conversational in nature and will explore the experiences that the participant has had with teacher leadership. The participant will also create a visual representation of a teacher leadership experience. All meetings will be audio taped. Visual representations will be photographed. The investigator will take handwritten notes. The topics for each of the meetings will be those experiences of teacher leadership (broadly defined as leadership roles teachers fill outside of typical classroom duties). Sample questions: How did the idea of becoming a teacher leader first arise? How did you talk about being a teacher leader with other teachers? Describe the first time you had to lead a meeting of fellow teachers.
Potential Risks and Discomforts	<p>It is possible that you will experience anxiety or nervousness during the interviews. While unlikely, there is the potential for the loss of or a breach of confidentiality.</p> <p>You do not have to answer any question that makes you uncomfortable. You are encouraged to ask the investigator questions throughout the duration of the study. You may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.</p>
Potential Benefits	There are no direct benefits from participating in this research. This research is not designed to help you personally, but the results may help the investigator learn more about teachers' experiences of teacher leadership. We hope that, in the future,

	<p>other people might benefit from this study through improved understanding of the phenomenon of teacher leadership.</p>
Confidentiality	<p>This research project involves making audiotapes of you to ensure accuracy of transcription, collecting your written reflections, and photographing visual representations you create. Any potential loss of confidentiality will be minimized by securing data in password-protected files on a password-protected computer and by storing printed transcripts, reflections, and notes in a locked cabinet. Only Kristin Hamilton will have access to these files and materials.</p> <p>In addition, your identity will be protected by using your first name or by using a participant-provided pseudonym. Your last name will not be used on any collected data, notes, or transcripts. All data, audio tapes, written reflections, photographs, notes, and transcripts will be destroyed in five years.</p> <p>If we write a report or article about this research project, your identity will be protected to the maximum extent possible. Your information may be shared with representatives of the University of Maryland, College Park or governmental authorities if you or someone else is in danger or if we are required to do so by law.</p>
Right to Withdraw and Questions	<p>Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part. If you decide to participate in this research, you may stop participating at any time. If you decide not to participate in this study or if you stop participating at any time, you will not be penalized or lose any benefits to which you otherwise qualify. If you are an employee or student of the University of Maryland, your employment status or academic standing at UMD will not be affected by your participation or non-participation in this study.</p> <p>If you decide to stop taking part in the study, if you have questions, concerns, or complaints, or if you need to report an injury related to the research, please contact the investigator:</p> <p>Kristin Hamilton [home address] [phone numbers] hamiltkb@umd.edu</p> <p>Dr. Francine Hultgren Department of Teaching, Learning, Policy and Leadership 2311 B Benjamin Building University of Maryland College Park, MD 20742 301-405-4501 fh@umd.edu</p>

Participant Rights	<p>If you have questions about your rights as a research participant or wish to report a research-related injury, please contact:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"> University of Maryland College Park Institutional Review Board Office 1204 Marie Mount Hall College Park, Maryland, 20742 E-mail: irb@umd.edu Telephone: 301-405-0678 </p> <p>This research has been reviewed according to the University of Maryland, College Park IRB procedures for research involving human subjects.</p>	
Statement of Consent	<p>Your signature indicates that you are at least 18 years of age; you have read this consent form or have had it read to you; your questions have been answered to your satisfaction and you voluntarily agree to participate in this research study. You will receive a copy of this signed consent form.</p> <p>If you agree to participate, please sign your name below.</p>	
Signature and Date	NAME OF PARTICIPANT [Please Print]	
	SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT	
	DATE	

APPENDIX D: SEQUENCE OF INTERACTIONS AND PARTICIPANT INVOLVEMENT

	Ambereen	Chris	Dolly	Michelle	Rose	Tanya
Individual Conversation 1	•	•	•	•	•	•
Reflection 1		•	•	•	•	•
Group Conversation 1			•		•	•
Individual Conversation 2			•	•	•	•
Reflection 2			•			•
Group Conversation 2		•	•		•	•
Reflection 3		•	•		•	•
Individual Conversation 3	•			•		•

APPENDIX E: REFLECTIVE ASSIGNMENT #1

The purpose of this first reflective assignment is to practice writing phenomenological descriptions and to begin to think about teacher leadership as you have experienced it.

Your reflective assignment

Describe a significant moment or instance when you felt like a “teacher leader.”

As you write your description, keep the following guidelines in mind (van Manen, 2014):

- Describe the experience as much as possible as you live(d) through it. Avoid causal explanations, generalizations, or abstract interpretations.
- Describe the experience from the inside, as it were—almost like a state of mind: the feelings, the mood, the emotions, and so on.
- Focus on a particular example or incident of the object of experience: describe specific events, an adventure, a happening, a particular experience.
- Try to focus on an example of the experience that stands out for its vividness, or as it was the first or last time.
- Attend to how the body feels, how things smell(ed), how they sound(ed), and so on.
- Avoid trying to beautify your account with fancy phrases or flowery terminology. (p. 314)

What is a phenomenological description?

A phenomenological description attempts to capture *what an experience was like as it was happening*—as you lived it. It does not contain possible explanations, theories, or other rationalizations about what was done and why.

Here is one example in which the writer attempts to provide an account of how he experienced the beginning of fatherhood:

How did “having children” enter my life? I remember several occasions when friends of ours would speak of the deep satisfaction of having young children of their own. How it changed their way of looking at life and at the world. I always thought I understood what they were saying (now I know that I did not). I countered that I felt no lack, no need for a family, and argued eloquently I believe, how the children I taught at school gave me similar satisfactions without having to “possess” some of my own. I felt a strong, almost physical dislike for the idea of fatherhood, and privately considered my friends to be quite foolish. Talking to young parents is like talking to religious converts, I said to Judith, my wife. As we would return home, we would talk about how we considered ourselves lucky to be able to enjoy each other, our quiet, our books, and our freedom to do what we liked and to go where we pleased. Very occasionally Judith would speak of her doubt about our resolve

not to have children. I always resisted the discussion convincingly. I was thirty-something and felt young.

One day we visited Judith's cousin, who had just given birth to her third child. I recall the chaos of the home—food smells, crackers, junk, stains, toys, and blankets. Altogether I felt somewhat repulsed at the greasiness of the child scene—such contrast to our home or my classroom. One moment stands out clearly. My wife had taken the newborn baby in her arms and then I felt strangely moved—she and this new baby, so lovely—it seemed right, good. The next time the topic of having children came up (I might have brought it up myself), I still resisted, but weakly. I doubted my ability to be an enthusiastic father. Again I told Judith, but more feebly this time, that I distrusted the world we live in; it seemed so foolish, so egotistic to bring children into the madness. Secretly, I could hardly wait for our first child to be born. Yet at times I felt afraid. What if I could not love this child Judith was bearing? Feeling guilty, I only admitted my uncertainties to myself while talking supportively to my wife. (van Manen, 1997, pp. 54-55)

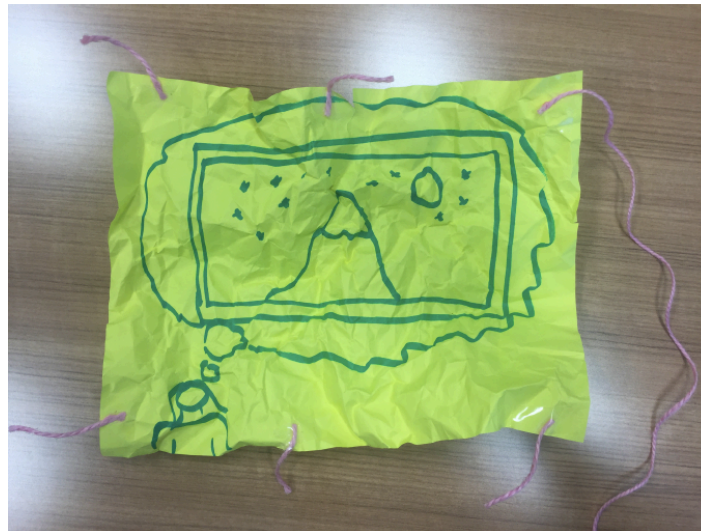
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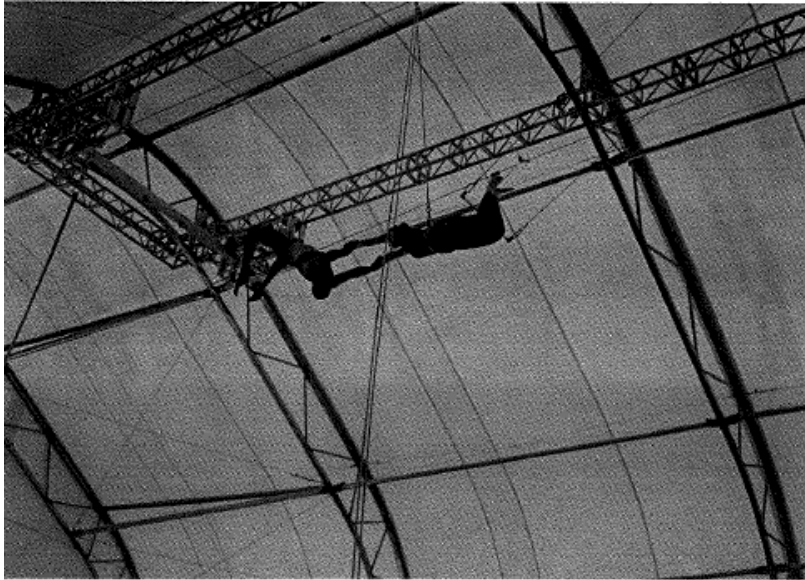
APPENDIX F: TANYA'S RENDERINGS OF TEACHER LEADERSHIP



Tanya's group conversation 1 depiction of teacher leadership after she crumpled it.
Tanya created this sculpture during the first group conversation to show what a teacher leadership experience is like for her.

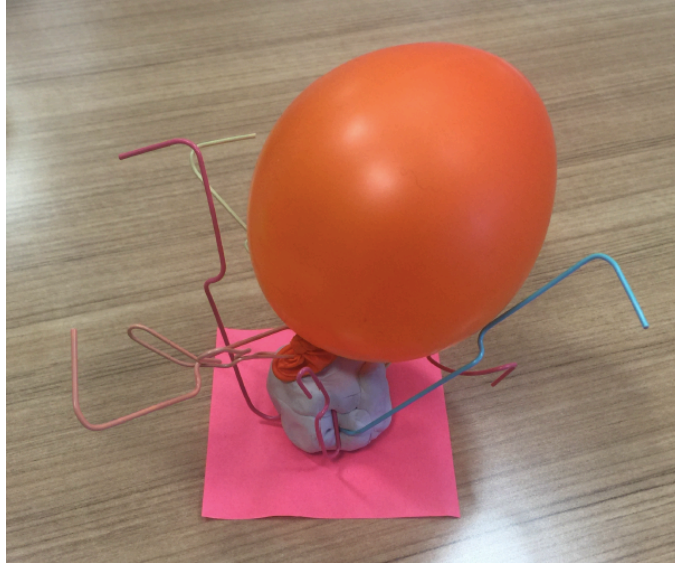


Tanya's group conversation 1 depiction of teacher leadership when it was opened.
Tanya created this sculpture during the first group conversation to show what a teacher leadership experience is like for her.



Personal photograph Tanya selected to depict what teacher leadership is like for her during individual conversation 2. Tanya's mother took this picture of Tanya taking a trapeze lesson with the instructor.

APPENDIX G: DOLLY'S RENDERING OF TEACHER LEADERSHIP



Dolly's group conversation 1 sculpture. Dolly created this sculpture during the first group conversation to show what a teacher leadership experience is like for her.

APPENDIX H: ROSE'S RENDERING OF TEACHER LEADERSHIP



Rose's group conversation 1 sculpture. Rose created this sculpture during the first group conversation to show what a teacher leadership experience is like for her.

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